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## “RENAISSANCE” \*

MELODRAMA, BY HOLGER DRACHMANN

*Translated from the Danish by Lee M. Hollander*

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

TINTORETTO (Jacopo Robusti), Venetian painter.

GIULIO, called ‘Night’ } his pupils.  
FILIPPO, called ‘Day’ }

TERESINA, a daughter of the people.

ANDREA BALBI, a young patrician.

AN ARMENIAN MERCHANT.

A GONDOLIER.

A SERVANT OF LADY LAETIZIA.

CHORUS OF GONDOLIERS.

SCENE: *The house of Tintoretto in Venice.*

TIME: *From afternoon till evening — last half of the sixteenth century.*

*A room in TINTORETTO’S house. In the background a large window opening on the Canal Grande — hung with a curtain. In the left wall there is a smaller window — opening on a narrow ‘gutter,’ a tributary canal. Door to the right — covered with large, heavy drapery. In the foreground, on either side, tables with chairs and cushioned benches. On the couch lie draperies and costumes. On the table stand and lie statuettes, vases, urns, goblets, weapons, palettes, painters’ brushes, etc. In the background easels; against the wall lean paintings (with their faces turned to the wall) and a figure clad in armor; an iron-bound box.*

*Tintoretto (enters through the door on the right, thrusting the drapery aside; hesitates a moment. He is in a traveling costume, with a cloak over*

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*his shoulder, carries his sword in his hand, which is gloved. Turns about; speaks into the other room).— Save your welcome! Work like thieves in the night — and you will forget this paltry life! (Lets the drapery fall; advances; throws his cloak over a chair, sword and gloves on the table; looks around.) So close in these rooms! (Goes to the background, pulls the curtain aside from the window with a jerk; the dome of the church of Maria Della Salute is seen over the roofs.) In Venice again — Salute! (Walks to and fro; steps to one of the paintings turned about, places it on an easel — shrugs his shoulders — places another one on the easel — shakes his head, takes a third painting up, but quickly turns it back again — goes to the table, throws himself down on a chair, resting his chin on his hand.)*

*(From the adjoining room are heard chords struck on a lute.)*

*Giulio's Voice (sings).—*

I too had me a sweetheart, trow,  
As white she was as Alpine snow,  
With tints of sunset greeting:  
She shifted White with Red — oh, yes—  
She shifted Mine with Thine — alas —  
So left she me alone one night  
Bound for another's meeting.  
Like to a rose so white and red,  
But now that rose is to me dead,  
And now ——

*Tintoretto (with a blow on the table).— Silence!*

*(The voice ceases; a palette and brushes have fallen on the floor.) TINTORETTO sits immovable, in thought.)*

*Giulio (thrusts the drapery aside; comes in quietly, with a portfolio under his arm; looks silently at TINTORETTO, and says with subdued voice).— You are sorrowing at your return, master?*

*Tintoretto (flaring up).— You fool! (Treads on the palette, and crushes the hair pencils underfoot.)*

*Giulio (bending down).— Master — your favorite brushes ——*

*Tintoretto. — Let them lie!*

*Giulio. — When will you get yourself new ones made, — Master Robusti?*

*Tintoretto (laughs loudly).— How, boy? I, whom they call Tintoretto, the dauber, the 'lightning painter' — I should not be able to make myself new tools in short time?*

*Giulio. — They slander you, master!*



*Tintoretto.*— Be sure — they have good cause to.

*Giulio.*— They make caricatures of you!

*Tintoretto.*— They never make any of bunglers!

*Giulio.*— As a man who stands on two ladders — and is painting three canvases — so long —

*Tintoretto (as if indifferent).*— By my friend Balbi?

*Giulio (evasively).*— I mention no names,— but I can sketch him!  
(*Points to his portfolio.*)

*Tintoretto.*— Keep your drawing and cultivate your art! Leave it to amateurs to caricature. (*Merrily.*) Next time we shall use three ladders — six canvases — and brushes so long! (*Points to his sword.*)

*Giulio.*— Master, you have recovered your cheerful humor — up in the mountains?

*Tintoretto.*— Tolerably, my boy!

*Giulio.*— Did you get much done,— up there on the prince's country-seat?

*Tintoretto.*— Lots! Portraits, landscapes, allegories — the devil knows what all. Why! I forgot — the gondolier is still waiting below — (*goes to the window at left and leans out.*) Beppo!

*Voice of a gondolier (from below).*— My lord?

*Tintoretto.*— Bring the whole concern into the hallway! Filippo will take it in! (*Throws a coin down.*) Here is your fare.

*The Voice.*— Excellenza!

*Tintoretto.*— Well?

*The Voice.*— Your lordship has given me a gold coin — I have no change!

*Tintoretto.*— Row away!

*The Voice.*— Long live the great Robusti!

*Tintoretto.*— Hold your tongue!

*The Voice.*— The friend of all gondoliers — the friend of the people — the greatest painter in Venice!

*Tintoretto (leaning out).*— Ho there, friend! row to the sailors' tavern on the corner — drink to my health there, with your comrades — till you see me standing on the bell tower of St. Mark — with flagpoles for brushes — painting our Lord in heaven — all angels and Death and the Devil below. And now go to the devil!

*The Voice.*— That I shall, Your Highness! And to-night the gondoliers will serenade you!

*Tintoretto.*— Bene! (*turns laughing from the window, walks up and down.* The gondolier's warning cry is heard in the narrow canal — answered by other cries, farther and farther away).— Ha-ïo! Ho-ïo!

*Giulio.*— Truly! You are the friend of the people — and you have regained your cheerful humor among the mountains.

*Tintoretto.*— Friend of the people? Indeed: just cast your money out of the window, and the friendship of the people will fly *in*. My good cheer? It remained in the mountains. Here the grief I had meets me on all sides. And the ditty you sing will not improve my humor.

*Giulio (with bowed head).*— I did not think it would wound you, master.

*Tintoretto.*— You did not think at all! You are too young for that. You twitter a ditty — which pleasantly touches your heart. Had you loved — as you sang you had — you would not sing.

*Giulio.*— Master, how can you know —

*Tintoretto.*— Hold your tongue! (*Kicks at the palette on the floor.*) Never more shall I paint a canvas — never again shall I get a model like her whom those lazy patricians took from me. (*Throws himself into a chair.*) A plague on their idleness, those drones — for whom art is a play, woman a plaything — and life a carnival! I shall go to England and paint signs for taverns. There, at any rate, the tavern is held in honor — and the women do not sell themselves.

*Giulio.*— Master —

*Tintoretto.*— Not that pitiful face! (*Softer.*) You are a genius, and devoted — and a whimperer like the night. Call Filippo!

*Giulio.*— Master — you rail at the patricians — have you not patrician blood in your veins, yourself?

*Tintoretto (laughs).*— A few drops, my boy! The rest is from the people — its marrow and pith, its strength for suffering — its courage to face life and to toil. It was just *that* which charmed her — Madonna Laetizia — the spoiled woman — beautiful as she was — proud as she was — and base as she acted. Alas, nevermore shall I get such a model again!

*Filippo (who has been standing for some time behind the drapery, stepping out with a laugh).*— But will you need such a one, master — if you are going to paint tavern signs?

*Tintoretto.*— Silly boy!

*Filippo.*— Terribly silly! and so dull that I cannot comprehend how one can grieve over having lost a model, in Venice, where there are a hundred if one.

*Tintoretto.*— Not one among a hundred! (*Adding, a moment after.*) She loved me and I painted her!

*Filippo.*— You painted her, which flattered her. She loved you — and sold herself to one of the old senators. What objection is there against keeping on loving and painting her?



*Tintoretto (flings a goblet at him).*

*Filippo (picks it up smiling).—*The poor goblet. (*Places it on the table.*) The last time you used it you drank Cornegliano wine from it — when Madonna Laetizia visited you. That was ever so long ago. You had been right cheerful that day, but toward evening you became a little drowsy. No wonder; we had begun to work at dawn; you, master, Giulio, and I! And then when I rowed Madonna home she mistook in the boat, as it was dark, and kissed my neck.

*Tintoretto (starts up).—*Fellow!

*Giulio.—*Master, hear him out!

*Filippo.—*Kissed me behind my ear — and whispered: your lord and master is becoming a trifle old!

*Tintoretto (first stands threateningly before FILIPPO, who puts his knuckles into his mouth; then walks to and fro).—*Yes, yes, yes! Just speak out, my merry jay! You are diligent, changeable — but merry as the day! And we will be merry—we will laugh, we will, at this paltry life! And then we will work, boys! But in order to be able to work one must love. *You* know nothing of that — will get to feel it before long. And then the heart aches—when one sees that one has acted like an ass—an old ass. Ha, ha, ha! So *that* she whispered into your ear? ‘Your lord and master is becoming a trifle old!’ Hurra, boys! Fetch me that strongbox there, filled with presents from highborn patrons and lords—gold and silver, and bronze and rubbish! Pull the old chest this way. I will count my conquests, for I am getting old, so they say, and then one grows avaricious! (*Points to the ironbound chest in the background.*)

*Giulio and Filippo.—*We cannot, master, it is too heavy!

*Tintoretto (lifts it up laughing, and places it on the floor).—*Too heavy for you, you young wagtails! (*Opens it.*) Stretch your necks now and open your eyes wide! And when you have seen your fill of this hodge-podge, you will fetch my friend, the Armenian merchant!

*Filippo.—*How, that rascal, that unbelieving cheat?

*Tintoretto.—*A Christian cheats his fellow-Christian most cheerfully; a Jew easily cheats five Christians; but an Armenian cheats ten Jews, and at the same time looks you as pious as a glad Christian! He is the man I can use!

*Giulio.—*But what is he to do for you, master?

*Tintoretto.—*He is to estimate the value of my treasures, that I have ‘smeared together’ by my art, just as *my* lord and master, old Titian (*lifting his cap*) has painted together for himself both wealth and honor! He is a great artist — our very greatest — that old man who is now in his

nineties! I know how he has put his talents to usury, like any Armenian! But he was wise in his time — never let passions and rage gain mastery over him — no one ever caricatured him, and no one calls *him* old!

*Filippo*.— Master, do not take it to heart so heavily, and let be with that Armenian!

*Tintoretto*.— Fetch me the Armenian, I say. He is to convert all this into ready money! I shall go far away from here, but first he shall sell me a precious drug.

*Giulio*.— Alas, Master——

*Tintoretto*.— No whimpering! Do you think painter Robusti should not take revenge — because Tintoretto has grown old — over fifty? (*laughs*.)

*Filippo* (*laughs*).— The best revenge is to paint away lustily and let Madonna fondle her moneybag!

*Tintoretto* (*threateningly toward him*).— A drug, I say, which quite imperceptibly makes one ‘a little drowsy’ until, without pain or moan, one dozes off to the long sleep!

*Filippo* (*shrugs his shoulders*).— Good night, Madonna.

*Tintoretto* (*half aside*).— And greet our common friend, little Andrea Balbi! (*A shout outside, from the left — several shouts — a woman’s scream — other shouts — tumult — screams — brawling — curses*.)

*Tintoretto* (*indifferently*).— How? Have people become lively again in Venice?

*Giulio* (*goes to the window to the left*).— It is in the direction of the sailors’ tavern on the corner — ugh! what a noise! (*Goes back*.)

*Tintoretto* (*laughs*).— Is *that* my health they are drinking?

*Filippo* (*leaning out*).— On the quay there stands a girl — they are tugging at her.

*Tintoretto*.— What’s that? My gondoliers?

*Filippo*.— No, there are also noblemen. She wants to jump into the water,—there, she jumped.

*Tintoretto*.— Quick! My sword! Filippo you follow me! Giulio, you remain here! (*Exit with FILIPPO*.)

*Giulio* (*alone*).— I must always stay behind as if I were a little girl! (*Looking out of the window*.) There they are running along the quay like two mountain goats — and *that* man a fine lady can accuse of being old! Now he lays about him with the flat of his sword, right and left, and knocks a big bully into the water. But that little cavalier escaped. Good for him that master did not catch sight of him! (*Leans out farther*.) There are the two again — Filippo has gotten a bloody nose,— and master is carrying a young woman on his shoulder. No, ’pon my word, if he doesn’t carry her like a



calf! I must downstairs. (*Runs out, leaving the door open, and the curtain drawn aside.*)

(*An ARMENIAN MERCHANT enters, looks around, advances cautiously, stops at the chest, picks up the various objects, carefully examining them, rubbing them on his sleeves; lets some drop again, takes others up — and steps aside, when he hears voices, and figures on his abacus.*)

*Tintoretto* (*outside*).— Fetch me cold water! (*Enters, carrying a young, fainting girl in his arms; lays her on the couch. FILIPPO is trying to stanch the blood from his nose; GIULIO brings water and sprinkles it on the young girl.*)

*The Armenian* (*approaching*).— A pretty girl you have picked up there, Master Robusti. Almost like a fish one has drawn up out of the water!

*Tintoretto*.— Ah! are you there? Call her back to life again — for you have skill in such matters.

*Armenian*.— And is it worth while, do you believe?

*Tintoretto*.— Scoundrel! All our trouble should be for nothing?

*Filippo* (*mopping his nose*).— Neither was it altogether for nothing. A pity I could not hit that little cavalier a blow.

*Tintoretto*.— Which one?

*Filippo*.— The one who took to his heels. Didn't you see him?

*Tintoretto*.— I was too busy. (*Pressing the water out of his boots.*)

*Armenian* (*stroking the brow of the girl and calling her by names*).— Annita — Marietta — Well, then, Teresina!

*Teresina* (*opening her eyes*).— Where am I? (*Beholding TINTORETTO.*)

Who are you?

*Filippo*.— Speak politely to the great master Robusti!

*Teresina*.— Robusti?

*Giulio*.— Tintoretto!

*Teresina*.— Oh — Tintoretto!

*Tintoretto*.— The people know me by my nickname.

*Filippo*.— That will you live longest by, master.

*Teresina*.— So it is you who paints the many great pictures! (*asking.*)

Do you never paint small ones?

*Tintoretto* (*smiling*).— How small?

*Teresina* (*with faint voice*).— Such a wee little picture of the Madonna— just to wear on my breast here.

*Filippo*.— She is giving an order right away.

*Teresina*.— I would kiss it — and pray for you, my lord, you who delivered me from — oh! (*Holding her head.*)

*Tintoretto*.— Are you still unwell?

*Teresina.*— I am so frightened and confused.

*Tintoretto* (who has approached an easel, places a canvas on it, seizes a piece of chalk, looks across at TERESINA, and draws a few lines).— Tell me about it; how did it all come about — but remain lying just as you are.

*Teresina.*— Tell — yes, if those two will go —

*Tintoretto.*— Out with you! (*GIULIO and FILIPPO leave the room.*) Why, you are real young — but gloriously developed (*drawing while scanning her.*) So you will confide in me — alone? (*Laughs.*) If you really dare to?

*Teresina.*— Yes, I feel like trusting you.

*Tintoretto* (*smiles*).— Don't I look dangerous at all? — because I have a bad reputation.

*Teresina.*— You?

*Tintoretto.*— Perhaps that you fear only the real young ones?

*Teresina.*— I fear only the man with the pale face — the red beard — the watery gray eyes — he has a power over me.

*Tintoretto.*— Was it therefore you wanted to throw yourself into the water? (*Drawing.*) Keep that position!

*Teresina* (*lets her head sink*).— Oh!

*Tintoretto* (*to the ARMENIAN who has kept himself in the background*) — Have you nothing with you to make her recover strength?

*Teresina.*— Ugh! — who is that dark man there? (*Closes her eyes, sinks back.*)

*Tintoretto.*— That is a very nice man — for a rascal, that is.

*Armenian* (*produces a small bottle*).— Ten drops of this in cold water.

*Tintoretto* (*with a glance*).— It's the right bottle, I hope?

*Armenian.*— I never mistake.

*Tintoretto.*— The devil may trust you! (*Softly to him.*) I want another liquor from you — one I know you have in your possession — one that makes drowsy — gradually — and that painlessly brings on the great sleep — from which there is no awakening.

*Armenian* (*with low voice*).— That you wish to buy of me? (*Smiles.*) Will not an opiate do?

*Tintoretto.*— No putting off! Name your price!

*Armenian.*— Such things I carry not with me. The young Nobili are so playful. Suppose one of them took the bottle from me — and compelled me to try it on myself.

*Tintoretto.*— That would make one rascal less on earth.

*Armenian* (*pointing to the chest*).— Will you sell? Can we strike a bargain?



*Tintoretto* (drawing, with a glance at TERESINA).— No, that can wait. Give her the ten drops!

*Armenian* (hands him a little bottle).— She fears me — entirely without reason. Give it to her yourself!

*Tintoretto* (hands him a gold coin).— There! The other drink you will bring me before evening. Go! (The ARMENIAN exit.)

*Tintoretto* (steps to TERESINA, after having poured the drink into a glass of water).— Come, child — drink!

*Teresina* (with closed eyes).— Never more will I drink of your wine, Andrea — you shall not lie about me!

*Tintoretto* (attentive).— Hm! What's that? (Looks long at her.) How beautiful she is, my waterlily! The people offer me their finest flower out of the mud of the canal, and in my art it shall strike root in Tintoretto's purest art! (Seizes her friendly by her hand.) Drink child, it will strengthen you.

*Teresina* (opens her eyes).— Yes — if you say so. (Drinks.)

*Tintoretto* (in anxious suspense, retiring a few steps, and regarding now her, now the bottle).— Well?

*Teresina*.— Ah! (With a little cry, getting up.) I am quite well, my legs can carry me again — come, let me kiss you! (Hastens forward to kiss his hand.) But, oh, dear, my skirt is all wet.

*Tintoretto* (chuckling).— That time the Armenian did not deceive me!

*Teresina*.— My lord, what shall I do to show you my gratitude? You have saved my life before, and now again.

*Tintoretto*.— What you shall do? (Busies himself with brushes and a palette, gets a canvas ready, turns half away, saying abruptly.) Strip!

*Teresina* (retreating to the side window).— What do you say?

*Tintoretto* (without looking at her).— Take off your clothes — the wet clothes — and resume your position as before!

*Teresina*.— Naked? Do you wish that I shall be naked, my lord?

*Tintoretto*.— Yes,— by all saints! (Advances eagerly toward her.)

*Teresina* (jumps up on the windowsill).— One step more — and I am down there where no one shall pull me out again. Santo Diavolelto!

*Tintoretto* (coming unconsciously to a stand, smiling).— In a towering rage — quivering nostrils — clothes dripping wet — the devil invoked! Bravissima!

*Teresina*.— You laugh! You are all alike — you highborn scoundrels! (About to jump out.)

*Tintoretto* (shouts).— Hold on! My word as a nobleman — stuff — my word as an artist! No one shall do you any harm — least of all I — come down, come down!

*Teresina (descends hesitatingly, scrutinizing his face).* I believe you! You cannot lie!

*Tintoretto (laughs scornfully).* — I can lie — I can steal — I can kill — all mortal sins I can commit — and do it all with pleasure. Perhaps you do not believe me?

*Teresina.* — I do not believe you can deceive a poor girl! And now let me go my way.

*Tintoretto.* — Stay here! You shall have clothes — you shall have a home — Giulio and Filippo to wait on you — me as company. I will paint you — stay with me!

*Teresina (hesitating).* — Stay here with you? (*asking*). Yes, but *what* do you want to do with me?

*Tintoretto.* — First of all, give you dry clothes.

*Teresina (shaking her head).* — I am used to it! My father was a fisherman — he sold his fish in Chiozza — I was always with him in his barque. And then he was drowned. Me they pulled on land. My mother ran away with a stranger. I slept on the streets — in the archways — in rain and wind. The gondoliers gave me to eat in their taverns. They all wanted me to become their wife — but as everybody wanted me, no one got me. (*Laughs.*) I laughed at them.

*Tintoretto.* — There you were right!

*Teresina.* — And then came the man with the pale face.

*Tintoretto.* — And what you refused the gondoliers, that he took?

*Teresina (shakes her head).* — Nothing did he take from me. Ah, yes, my peace. But I ran — and am ever running, running, running from him. He has a power over me — his eyes have a power. (*She closes her eyes, squatting on the floor.*)

*Tintoretto.* — *Those* eyes we will take pains to find and to get closed! (*Adds.*) That is, if you will stay with me then?

*Teresina (opens her eyes, gazes long and strangely at him, crosses herself, kisses her hand, and lays it on her breast).* — Oh my lord, I shall stay gladly with you — always.

*Tintoretto (nodding).* — Agreed then!

*Teresina.* — But you must not (*in a low voice*) — not ask me to — what you asked me to just now.

*Tintoretto.* — The devil, I am an artist — not a dangler after women. I paint you.

*Teresina (shaking her head slowly).* — Why has Madonna always long clothes?

*Tintoretto (is made to smile).* — Are there no other women than the Madonna?



*Teresina (remains silent).*

*Tintoretto (with soft voice).*— If you were to love me a little? Would it be impossible? (*Adds mockingly*) Old though I am?

*Teresina (looks at him with large eyes, whispers)* — I do not know what it is to love any one. (*Erect, stronger.*) But I know what it is to be afraid of a man! (*Appealingly*) Oh my lord, hide me with you!

*Tintoretto (after a moment's consideration).*— Good! (*Goes to the door.*) I have chased my servants, they cheated me and told me lies. Now I shall get your room in order. (*Pushes the curtain aside, looks back at her, who remains standing immovable.*) Strange child! or are all women alike? (*Exit.*)

*Teresina (looks long after him; then she heaves a deep sigh; trembles suddenly with cold; makes a motion as if to overcome it—slaps her wet clothes—smiles—begins to look around—curiously—fingers the stuff of the curtain—walks to the couch—examines the costumes and robes that lie there as they have been flung down—handles them—stops with a little cry).*— Oh!

*Giulio (has come in through the door, with his lute under his arm; he lays it down quickly; toward her).*— You beautiful girl!

*Teresina (trying to look as if she had not touched the costumes).*— Who are you?

*Giulio (smiling).*— He that has the supervision of all his master's costumes. Why, you saw me a short while ago.

*Teresina (indifferently).*— Was it you I saw? You stared so at me. And you have a girl's eyes.

*Giulio.*— Why, you are standing in a puddle of water. Come and change clothes.

*Teresina (shakes her head).*

*Giulio.*— Master wishes it!

*Teresina.*— Very well! Show me a place where I can — but, I have no dry clothes to put on.

*Giulio.*— Master and Filippo are getting your room ready upstairs. Master chased all his servants, when he left. The house has not been put in order for ever so long — it looks awful everywhere. But now it will be different. Master is swearing up there — that is a good sign — and he has laughed! (*Interrupts himself.*) Here is a good place for changing clothes.

*Teresina.*— Here?

*Giulio.*— We will fix up a screen — do you see — with these big canvases. That way! (*Places several canvases together and fastens them to each other.*) We always do so, when we have a model.

*Teresina (bridling up a bit).*— Oh, a model!

*Giulio.*— You can choose what robe you will. This one? (*Shows her one.*)

*Teresina.*— I am not going to wear the clothes those dirty girls have worn.

*Giulio (a little astonished).*— How?

*Teresina.*— Ah, I know it well enough. They drift around under supervision — or sit on the *Calle di Ridotto*, and they ——

*Giulio.*— Well, they what?

*Teresina.*— They sell themselves.

*Giulio (laughs embarrassed).*— Not quite so bad. They are paid by the hour or by the day.

*Teresina.*— I don't want any pay, and I don't want to put on those clothes.

*Giulio.*— But your teeth are chattering with cold. Come now, be a good girl! (*Points behind the screen.*) Master has said so.

*Teresina (goes behind the screen).*— Hand me ——

*Giulio.*— Well?

*Teresina (stretches her arm forth).*— Give me *your* clothes!

*Giulio (laughs).*— You pretty girl! What would master say? But here lies a robe a fine lady has worn, when Master Robusti painted her.

*Teresina.*— A fine lady?

*Giulio.*— Madonna Laetizia!

*Teresina (after a short pause).*— Madonna Laetizia? Hand it over! Let me see!

*Giulio (throws a light drapery and a belt over the screen).*— There it is!

*Teresina.*— More!

*Giulio.*— There is no more!

*Teresina.*— But that is nothing at all!

*Giulio (laughs).*— Nothing? A drapery of gauze and a belt.

*Teresina (throws it back).*— Let the fine lady keep it. *When* does she come here?

*Giulio.*— Never more! Hush!

*Teresina (after a little pause).*— I am cold. I cannot get my wet clothes on again. (*Stamps.*) Why did you not let me keep them on?

*Giulio (has picked up a costume and throws it over to her).*— Here is a costume that is quite new — that no one has worn. Master bought it up there in *Pieve di Cadore* — where the great Titian was born. It is a peasant girl's costume from the mountains.

*Teresina.*— That will perhaps fit me. (*Asking*) The mountains, you say?



*Giulio (has seated himself and takes up his lute).*— Master goes up to the mountains, now and then, to recover his strength, after much work, and when he is annoyed.

*Teresina (comes forth, only half dressed).*— Can he be annoyed?

*Giulio (without looking that way).*— Who cannot?

*Teresina.*— He?

*Giulio (looks at her).*— You pretty girl!

*Teresina (with a little cry).*— Don't! (*Runs back.*)

*Giulio (embarrassed).*— I could not help it.

*Teresina (after a little pause).*— What peasant girl was that?

*Giulio (laughs).*— As if I knew! Master sent the costume here — he hardly looked at the girl, I suppose. (*Adds.*) But you he does wish to look at, when you are ready. (*Asks.*) Are you ready soon?

*Teresina.*— Right away! Only these few hooks — back here.

*Giulio (rising).*— Shall I help you?

*Teresina.*— No, no — stay where you are.

*Giulio.*— Because I am used to that — do you see. I have got such deft fingers. (*After a pause.*) What are you doing? Dreaming?

*Teresina.*— Oh, yes, perhaps I was thinking a little, isn't it really strange that I am here. But where should I be?

*Giulio (in low voice).*— Poor child!

*Teresina (comes forth in skirt and headdress; the bodice she has in her hand, and holds together before her breast the white chemise, which is cut low).*— You are not to call me 'poor child'!

*Giulio (embarrassed).*— I really did not mean——

*Teresina.*— I am used to helping myself (*bridling*) and I can go whenever I want to! (*goes back.*) I am not afraid — neither of you nor of your master — least of all you!

*Giulio (quietly).*— Pretty child — proud girl! (*Strikes some chords on his lute.*)

*Teresina (sticks her head out).*— What was that?

*Giulio (moved).*— You will have it so good with us. You don't know master. They slander him. But he is noble and good and highminded. There is no reason for being afraid of him. And as to Filippo and me — why, we are not accustomed to frighten little girls!

*Teresina.*— You use so many words. Play a little for me!

*Giulio (glad).*— With all my heart. What?

*Teresina (comes forth, finishing her dressing).*— How can I know — as I have never heard you? (*Laughs.*) Wait a moment — lend me a mirror!

*Giulio (hands her a beautiful polished hand-mirror from the table, brushing off the dust with his sleeve).—* Here is the pretty mirror Madonna Laetizia used, the last time she ——

*Teresina (lets the mirror drop to the floor).*

*Giulio.—* Oh!

*Teresina (seats herself on a chair with her chin propped on her hands).—* So her your master painted? Were you here also?

*Giulio (nods).—* At times — yes.

*Teresina.—* Did they make you play for them?

*Giulio.—* Play and sing, yes (*childlike*). She was very fond of my voice.

*Teresina.—* And she will not come here any more?

*Giulio (shakes his head).*

*Teresina.—* Is your master also fond of hearing you sing?

*Giulio.—* Formerly — yes. Now he has been away for a long time. When he came back to-day — and he heard me sing — he became very angry.

*Teresina.—* Did you sing something that fine lady liked?

*Giulio (embarrassed).—* No, it was something — that I had put together myself. And yet he became angry.

*Teresina.—* Let me hear it.

*Giulio (strikes some chords, stops).—* I cannot, when you gaze at me that way.

*Teresina.—* Sing something cheerful — something new — something only I get to hear!

*Giulio.—* The cheerful — that is Filippo's line.

*Teresina.—* But if I beg you to!

*Giulio (bends over his lute, looking up at her).—* If you will permit me to <sup>me</sup>kiss your hand!

*Teresina.—* No, I will not!

*Giulio.—* Then just look kindly upon me—oh, smile, you pretty girl — and then my song will be bright and warm.

*Teresina (laughs).—* It seems you need many preparations.

*Giulio.—* Yes — as an artist!

*Teresina (smiles).—* Now, are you really an artist — do you believe?

*Giulio.—* Oh, master said so. And he does not praise much. He said I was a genius.

*Teresina.—* A genius — what is that?

*Giulio (a little nonplussed).—* In the first place — in the first place, it is to be a very hard worker.



*Teresina (laughs).*— Then I am not a genius (*with a little sigh*), for nobody has taught me to work at anything.

*Giulio.*— You will learn that here before long! But, in the second place, it is one who knows all — so to say — without having to think about it — and thirdly —

[ ] *Teresina.*— Hold on! Federigo up there from Zattere — the gondolier — he is an improvisatore, do you know —

*Giulio.*— No, I do not know (*a little supercilious*). How am I to know all your gondoliers?

*Teresina (without letting herself be disturbed).*— Yes, that is he who sings all those verses and songs — after Ave Maria — when twilight falls — and when the red lamp is lit out there over the Lagune — for the ‘Madonna of the Pile’ (*quietly*) my own little red lamp!

*Giulio.*— Now you are again gazing so far away — oh, do come back!

*Teresina (after a deep sigh).*— Ah, yes, Federigo recited that beautiful long verse about being fond of — about being in love!

*Giulio (somewhat angry).*— And so you fell in love with him — basta!

*Teresina (curt).*— How you talk! Why, you understand nothing. He said: He who is in love understands all — is able to do all — knows all — so to say, without thinking about it. (*Looks inquiringly at him.*) Is it so with you?

*Giulio (clearing his throat).*— That is not at all what I mean. I am an artist — Tintoretto’s pupil. Master himself has said: an artist ought to be able to do all! He ought to be able to draw, to paint, to model, he ought to have his anatomy at his fingers’ end! And just as well as paint, he ought to be a musician — play on some instrument — compose a sonnet! Also, he ought to be able to ride, to row a boat, to wield his sword, holding his wrist *that way*! And everything he ought to do in such fashion that one does not notice that it costs him pains. And in all one ought to see that he strikes out something *new*, something hitherto not known and not seen — even if he is to borrow here and there, whenever he sees his chance! But the style must be his *own*, flesh of his flesh, drawn from his own blood, felt through his own senses, life of his life. *Then* is he a genius — says master!

*Teresina (with flashing eyes).*— And he is that?

*Giulio.*— Yes!

*Teresina (looking before her, with her hands under her knees, her eyes gleaming).*

*Giulio.*— Well, where are you now again? (*Rallying.*) Out there over the lagune — with the little red lamp — for ‘Madonna of the Pile’? You child!

*Teresina.*— It must be glorious to be an artist — and a man!

*Giulio (nods, smiling, strikes his chest).*— So it is!

*Teresina (turning her eyes on him).*— I am afraid that ——

*Giulio.*— That what?

*Teresina.*— That you are not such a one!

*Giulio.*— Oh — you ill-mannered, silly girl!

*Teresina (friendly, taking his hand).*— I did not mean to anger you — I like to sit by your side — we can talk so well together — I am fond of hearing your voice.

*Giulio (interrupts).*— To be sure you do! (*tucking up his sleeve*). Do you see this wrist — and that hand——

*Teresina (smiles, laying her hand and arm by the side of his).*— Yes, like mine!

*Giulio (wrinkling up his forehead).*— You may be sure it can manage the red-chalk pencil — but also the sword. Master has taught me both!

*Teresina.*— All the same, I can't get myself to be afraid of you! I always feel as if I was talking to one of my own!

*Giulio (rising).*— A little girl — what?

*Teresina (drawing him down).*— You wanted to kiss my hand before. Kiss it, then — and my arm, too!

*Giulio (kneeling down).*— Ah, you are — (*kisses her hand and arm tenderly and violently*).

*Teresina.*— So! no more now! (*laughing, lays his lute into his arms*). Now attack *that*! Play and sing — but nothing sad, for then I am made to weep, and I am afraid of *that*.

*Giulio (resting his head on her knees, looking up into her eyes, and pre-luding on his lute).*— Kneeling here by your feet, you beautiful girl, I shall sing of the eyes I look into: they are dark blue, like the waters of the lagune, framed with the gold of the sinking sun.

*Teresina (bent laughing over him).*— I have red hair, you mean to say?

*Giulio.*— You must not interrupt a singer, for then his colors will run together.

*Teresina.*— Why, sing then — and do not paint!

*Giulio.*— But if I am not to paint I cannot sing. Sounds and colors are one!

*Filippo (enters).*— A pretty sight! Master ought to see that.

*Teresina.*— Ah! (*starts to rise*).

*Giulio (holds her back).*— Filippo is not *always* going to disturb my devotions.



*Filippo.*— I should like to take part in them myself. Teresina's room is in order. Master is changing his clothes. (*Looking at her more closely.*) But, why, there we have our little peasant girl from the mountains.

*Teresina (turning quickly).*— Where?

*Filippo (points laughing at her).*— You yourself — in that costume.

*Teresina (looks down at herself).*— Is it becoming to me, perhaps?

*Filippo (kisses his fingertips to her).*— Most charming! *That's* the way master will like you. He is always glad when he has been up in the mountains.

*Giulio.*— I have told her that already — all about it.

*Teresina (sitting quiet for a moment).*— The mountains? Do you know them? Have you ever been there?

*Giulio and Filippo (at the same time).*— Oh, more than once.

*Teresina.*— You shout so. (*Quietly.*) I have only seen them — out there over the lagune — far, far away — the blue Alps.

*Filippo.*— I was there with master, last year.

*Giulio.*— And I year before last.

*Teresina.*— Tell me! *How* is it really? How high are the mountains? As high as this house? or as Maria della Salute yonder?

*Filippo (hastening to be the first one to speak).*— Set this house three times on top of itself — no, even more! And then you set a wee little mountain goat way up there — and by your side a cow. And then the cow and the mountain goat can't see each other — *so* high are the mountains!

*Teresina (reflecting).*— No — I can't see it!

*Giulio (pushes FILIPPO aside, gesticulating before TERESINA).*— Imagine that you are entering the church of Maria della Salute, yonder. You look up into the dome. It lifts itself slowly, for every step you take. The air of heaven streams down on you, pure and cool, and from the side walls, there rush down beside you the waters of torrents and streams.

*Teresina (listening attentively).*— The canals?

*Giulio.*— No, the canals stand still, but there the waters rush by speedily and you hear a music more powerful than any organs.

*Teresina (with rapt attention).*— That must be lovely!

*Giulio.*— You see no painted images of saints, but the whole is one great picture that encloses you, living and yet immovable, and you breathe peace — are gladly moved — feel yourself as if borne up by the air — drawn aloft — aloft — where the forest pine sways her slender spire in the cloud.

Thus are the mountains!

*Teresina (folding her hands over her knees, looking before her).*— Ah, to be there!

*Filippo (laughs).*— If you are real nice — and do not play the master any trick — he will surely take us all along, up there — next time!

*Teresina.*— I almost believe — I should best like to be there all alone.

*Filippo.*— Well, I declare!

*Teresina.*— The first time, I should best like it to be alone, and afterwards alone with your master.

*Filippo (laughs).*— Ha, ha! I like that! I am going to tell master that!

*Teresina.*— Yes, because you are so noisy!

*Giulio.*— But how about me?

*Teresina.*— You I should like to have along — and then *that* there too (*points to his lute*) should accompany us, and you should play when the waters rush past. (*Corrects herself.*) No, for then we could not hear anything!

*Giulio (preluding).*— We would choose us a place at some distance from a small waterfall — where the sound would be muffled by the mountain forest. Best at nightfall. Then the mountain grows still higher — dark against the trembling, bright air. And *that* place do I know, there have I sat and composed — whilst night fell around me, and all became so spiritlike — (*softly*) the song of my love also!

*Filippo.*— There now! he is in the clouds again. Come on, then, with your nocturne! For it is *that*, anyhow, you are strumming.

*Teresina (nods friendly to GIULIO).*

*Giulio.*— You will listen? (*Plays and sings to soft accompaniment.*)

#### NOCTURNE

Sleepest thou, child?  
 Now arches the darkening blue above —  
 Whispering rills, torrents that roar,  
 Far, far  
 Tumultuous, passionate longings;  
 Hovering peace  
 Now descends on the mountains,  
 Low hear it calling: my love!  
 From the murmuring lips of the fountains.

Then towers darkly the massy mountain,  
 'Gainst starry skies castellated,  
 A guard of legends and stories old



Doth watch o'er the princess sleeping there  
 Doth watch o'er thy dreams and longings fair,  
 Doth watch thee with breath abated.

Sleepest thou, child?  
 I know thee so well — and know thee not,  
 Embraced thee so oft — yet embraced thee not,  
 Thou yieldest not wholly in love to me,  
 And yet I know I am dear to thee.

*That* set the guard of legend and song  
 About her dreaming, up yonder,  
 That rendered my journey with yearning so long,  
 That made me wander with awe among  
 The glistening tops of the mountains.

White chastity dreams on the peaks there above,  
 And ever renews and strengthens my love:  
 Thou fondledst me oft — yet in purity,  
 Didst surrender thyself so wholly to me,  
 And yet to me art far distant.

Turreted peak 'gainst the blue of night,  
 Faint-dying whisp'ring of brook and rill,  
 Murmuring, vocal fountains:  
 Silent the night,  
 Silent my song,  
 Silent my loved one —  
 Silent.

(*There is a moment's silence. Then TERESINA bends over GIULIO, kisses him lightly on his brow and whispers:*) That was beautiful!

*Filippo (snatching GIULIO's lute).*— So, now he gets kiss and applause — and what get I? (*Strumming.*) Don't you believe that I also have written songs in the mountains, both by day and by night? Oh, I know a little one about the wild boy and the quiet boy. Do you want to hear it?

*Teresina (smiles).*— Yes — yes.

*Filippo (tentatively).*— How was it now? The one comes and the other goes. I was to provide game for the master's table — and there were so many sweet girls to look at. And when I sauntered down, then, along

the waterfall, I made up songs to the accompaniment of the roaring waters, but, sure enough, that river did not flow with sugarwater. (*Plays and sings.*)

## PAGE'S STRUMMING

Oh, by day I have a thousand  
 Stupid things to think about,  
 Am to shoot big game on the mountains,  
     Myself a wild and scampering goat;  
 And each passing lass as't chances,  
 Stare I at — as I would wed:  
     Of a bosom catch I glances  
     In a snow-white ready bed.

But at nightfall grow I quiet,  
 Like a little timid mouse;  
 From the wine and cheer I steal me,  
     Leave unguarded yard and house,  
 Curl me up just like a little  
 Dog close by her bed as toy:  
     Oh, by night I am so quiet —  
     But by day th' unruly boy!

*Teresina (clapping her hands).*— Yes, that was amusing!

*Filippo.*— Which one do you like best?

*Teresina (evasively).*— Why, that is not so easy to say.

*Filippo.*— Nonsense — you shall say it! (*laughs.*) Because I mean to be your sweetheart.

*Giulio (rises, advances toward him).*— You?

*Filippo.*— Teresina is cheerful — she will like to be friends with the 'Day'!

*Giulio.*— Teresina is gentle — she will love the 'Night.'

*Teresina (laughs).*— I will put you two together — and like both day and night — that is, if you behave nicely!

*Filippo (with his hand on his dagger).*— No, she shall choose!

*Giulio (likewise).*— Choose, Teresina!

*Tintoretto (in the door; he has changed apparel).*— Little game-cocks! (*Merry.*) What, are you busy turning my little girl's head? Into the other room with you — to your work! You are to lay on the ground-color of the



large canvas in there, in the hall. I just wish to pay my respects to my 'dear old Venice.' So soon as I return, we are going to fall to work with it. Half the night through — by lamplight (*looks at TERESINA*), for I have grown to feel like it again! Into the other room with you! (*GIULIO and FILIPPO exeunt to right.*)

*Teresina.*— What am I to do, my lord?

*Tintoretto.*— You? (*He steps up to her, lays his hands on her shoulders, bends down, kisses her hair, holds her at arm's length — looks long — closely and tenderly at her — says quietly*) You are to keep your promise — stay with me — and not deceive me! (*He then leaves the room; nodding back at her.*)

*Teresina* (*stands still a while, looking after him; heaves a little sigh — about to go to the door, but stops and hesitates*).— No — for they are to work in there! (*She goes to the chest, whose lid has remained open — looks at the objects — kneeling down — examines and admires with little exclamations*). Oh, my, how grand! How precious! indeed, he has many fine things! The great master!

(*The afternoon is advancing; warm golden reflexes fill the room; gradually twilight sets in.*)

(*ANDREA BALBI bobs his head in behind the curtain, having softly opened the door.*)

*Andrea Balbi* (*stealing noiselessly over the floor*).— Thus he catches her with his gilded toys (*bends down, putting his arm around TERESINA's waist.*)

*Teresina* (*with a little cry*).— Away!

*Andrea* (*lifts her up and forces her to look into his eyes*).— It is I!

*Teresina* (*struggles, tears herself away, runs to the one side — holds her hands before her eyes*).— Away! I say — away, away, away!

*Andrea* (*between her and the door, himself near the door, toward which he glances*).— Do not shout so! Be reasonable! I come here to see you — risking my life (*laughs*) in the 'bulldog's' house!

*Teresina.*— Out! at once — he may be here this very minute.

*Andrea* (*smiles*).— See there, you are concerned about me, all the same!

*Teresina.*— He must not see you here. What might he not believe about me?

*Andrea* (*stroking his little reddish-blond mustache and approaching her*).— Aha! (*nearer*). Be reassured, my little Teresina! He and I are 'good friends' — and in his rage he did not catch sight of me — down there in that stupid street fight.

*Teresina* (*has collected herself, says with a defiant shake of her head*).— No, because you ran away!

*Andrea (laughs).*— Indeed I was forced to! *My* gondoliers let themselves be thrashed by him — *your* gondoliers let fly at *my* friends, and he would, by mistake, have run *me* through with his sword if *you* had not jumped into the water — you little hothead! (*Close by her.*) Now, why will you not let yourself nicely be led away by me, by your admirer and adorer — the poor, languishing Balbi? (*Tries to kiss her hand, laughing.*)

*Teresina (snatches her hand back, turns away).*— I warn you to go the quickest you can!

*Andrea.*— Yes — with you!

*Teresina.*— I remain *here*!

*Andrea (biting his lips; ironical).*— Already in service? And you have inspected the treasures he offers you for staying? Do not rely on it, Robusti is known for his miserliness — as all ‘oldish’ people who have scraped money together.

*Teresina (curt).*— I demand nothing of him — only permission to be let in peace in his house.

*Andrea (smiles).*— His gallantry toward women is a trifle coarse-grained — they say. His manner of painting and his manner of courting women, they will be of a kind. (*Snatches her hand quickly and looks up into her eyes from below.*) Come, Teresina! You belong where youth — where lavishness — where passion are!

*Teresina (meeting his glance, and involuntarily bowing down under it; with her free hand she passes over her brow, then presses it against her heart and says timidly).*— I belong nowhere, I am like a hunted animal. (*Pleading*) Let me be in peace!

*Andrea (watching the impression his glance has made on her; ingratiating).*— You are *mine* — you little free sea-fowl — and not *his* — the dauber, the smearer, who only talks about his canvases and his models!

*Teresina (painfully).*— Models — yes!

*Andrea (craftily, with a triumphant smile).*— Ah! has he begun already? he will paint you — and how?

*Teresina (raising her head).*— Hold your tongue!

*Andrea (continues).*— No, you shall not be his model, and his handmaid, he who is too old to retain his mistresses — and too stingy to keep his servants!

*Teresina.*— Hold your tongue, I say!

*Andrea.*— With *me* you shall be — not as in the fleeting moments when you drank my wine and listened to my words. You shall be at home with me — there where dwell beauty and idleness — divine idleness, that gives us sweet and merry days — the enemy of all dulness — the friend of all



pleasures. There Teresina belongs — the homeless child of careless Venice — come! (*He extends his arms: TERESINA bends quickly and slips from underneath his arms and runs to the opposite side; he follows after*).

*Teresina* (*stops, in commanding tone*).— Go!

*Andrea* (*laughs*).— Yes — come!

*Teresina*.— Go — or I shall call.

*Andrea* (*scornfully*).— Whom? Not, I hope, that couple of painter boys? (*Lays his hand on his sword.*) Let them beware of the patricians of Venice — and you, girl, do not tax our patience with your puttings-off! I know my power over you — as I know I have over all ladies of Venice. Follow me. I *pray* you! Next time I shall not implore you — I shall take you by force; I have people enough in my pay, and the nobles of Venice are more than a match for this ill-famed Tintoretto!

*Teresina* (*tossing up her head*).— The nobles of Venice — beggarly set!

*Andrea* (*half laughing, half enraged*).— What? What? No, but you are *beautiful* in all your insolence!

*Teresina*.— Madonna be praised that I once see you as you are — a wretch and coward, like all the rest of the fry! Out! — that he may not meet you!

*Andrea*.— This time — yes — but with your freshest kiss burning on my lips! (*She runs toward the door.*)

*Tintoretto* (*in the door, whose curtain he lifts up. Twilight is falling.*) Ah! (*Steps forward.*) A game, I see — cat and mouse. (*To TERESINA, who quickly runs past him and out.*) Go up to your room! (*Calls out of the door*), Giulio, Filippo, keep the girl company! No one is to leave the house! (*Advances toward BALBI, who in embarrassment leans on the back of a chair.*) My dear Andrea Balbi! (*Kisses him on both cheeks.*) My dearly beloved Andrea, my honored friend! How kind of you to visit me — so soon!

*Andrea* (*stammering*).— My dear master — I did not know —

*Tintoretto* (*with feigned merriment*).— Why, certainly, you must have known of my arrival (*quickly, with a glance*), for else you would not have any business here!

*Andrea*.— No, that is so — I heard of it recently on the Rialto.

*Tintoretto* (*laughs*).— Yes, there they gossip. Well, what news from the Rialto? But take a seat! The chair grows tired supporting your modesty so long.

*Andrea*.— Thanks, dear master, my modesty is not much at leisure just now. (*Looks toward the door.*)

*Tintoretto*.— Surely a glass of wine? (*Pours out.*)

*Andrea*.— I am expected.

*Tintoretto* (*winks with his eye*).— Always expected — happy Andrea — young Balbi! (*Clinks glasses with him.*) To your health! (*Drinks.*)

*Andrea*.— To yours, master! (*Glances toward the door.*)

*Tintoretto*.— Is there a draught from that door? (*Goes to it, shuts it, turns the key.*)

*Andrea*.— What are you doing?

*Tintoretto*.— Did I lock it? I did it absentmindedly. Oh, well, we can talk all the more undisturbed. (*Presses him to sit down.*)

*Andrea*.— Do you wish — to speak with me?

*Tintoretto*.— Just to chat a bit — about this and that — (*points*). Do you see these many pictures hanging here? Do you perhaps think *too* many, my dear Balbi?

*Andrea* (*with a forced smile*).— I certainly hope you do not pay any attention to idle talk, my dear Tintoretto!

*Tintoretto*.— I pay attention to mighty little — beside my art. But I one time thought you my friend (*laughs*) that was very stupid.

*Andrea*.— Dear master, I assure you, by my honor —

*Tintoretto*.— By your honor! Honor bright, Andrea! *What* do you hold in honor?

*Andrea* (*tosses his head*).— I am a nobleman — a Balbi!

*Tintoretto* (*laughs*).— Santo Diavolelto! I had almost forgotten it. (*Pours out wine.*) Do you know, Andrea, there was a time when I sought the beauty, the delicate refinement, the harmony in the society of your likes — of the young Nobili — the young ladies of the aristocracy — the patricians!

*Andrea* (*ingratiating*).— Our hearts and homes are ever open to you, Jacopo!

*Tintoretto* (*nods*).— To be sure, my boy! The idleness of your crowd needs to be stayed up, it has become confoundedly shaky — now that the state is resting on laurels *you* have not won!

*Andrea* (*shrugs his shoulders*).— We cannot resurrect our ancestors, as little as past times. But we can hold a protecting hand over art — and thereby make the state great and famous. (*Lays his hand confidentially on TINTORETTO's arm.*)

*Tintoretto* (*brushes his hand away*).— Behold! That coincides about with what I had believed — a pity only that I do not believe it any longer! (*Leans back in his chair, lifts his glass, takes a sip, gazes at it.*) Do you see this beaker, and the coat of arms engraved on it! Indeed, a beautiful vessel, a proud escutcheon! The old patrician who presented me with it —



when I had painted a fine picture for him — he said to me: ‘Kings and princes have drunk out of this glass, that knightly coat of arms was won on distant battlefields, now stands it dusty in my house — soon I myself am dust — let this our family’s heirloom become your property, Master Robusti, you who hold in honor the escutcheon of your art!’

*Andrea (with a little exclamation).*— That was my father — he was most friendly inclined to you.

*Tintoretto (clutches the glass violently; it breaks in pieces; he lets the fragments fall to the floor).*— Alas — a fragile proof of friendship and a fragile thing to engrave name and honor upon! He was a worthy man — in part — was your father! Why did he not give *you* this heirloom to hold in honor? (*Kicks at the fragments.*) Now my boys will sweep it out — and cast it in the canal!

*Andrea (alarmed).*— That was ill done, master! Why do you change mien — why do you grow so pale? You must certainly have heard something to my disadvantage — but I assure you, my dearest master——

*Tintoretto (laughs).*—Hush, hush! (*Takes up another cup and fills it.*) Drink wine, boy! That will color your thoughts red. (*Clinks glasses with him.*) Am I not the good-natured, disinterested, upright, brave Robusti, aside from the fact that I am also Tintoretto, the ‘lightning-painter,’ who smears himself together gold and presents on three ladders with brushes so long? (*Lifts up his sword, laughing.*) Drink, Andrea, we never know how long it is granted to us to revel. (*Empties his glass.*)

*Andrea (relieved a trifle).*— Now I know my old Tintoretto again, our great artist, our ornament, our ——

*Tintoretto (confidential, interrupts).*— Listen, Andrea; how is our dear common friend, Madonna Laetizia? Is she caressing her old money-bag — the one you got her coupled with so cleverly? Does she let her white chubby hands glide caressingly over the place on his head where his hair ought to be or (*winks to ANDREA and clinks his glass against ANDREA’S*) does she mistake in the dark and let her arm glide like a velvety snake around *your* curly-haired neck — you dearest red-headed wag — how?

*Andrea (evasively).*— Madonna Laetizia is a bewitching woman — we often speak about you, master Robusti — and with a sigh she calls to mind the time when it was so cherished an occupation for her, so great an honor, to sit for you.

*Tintoretto.*— Sit?

*Andrea (with a glance).*— Stand model.

*Tintoretto (laughs).*— Oh — she used to lie on this couch, half reclining against a dull-bronze background, her golden-brown hair spread out, her

left arm raised — heavens! those warm, pure reflections in *that* armpit — and the rosy shades of her breast, and the ivory tones of her neck, yellowish, rich — which the light from the window made bright, living. Always those tones stand before me — never more will I get to see them — such tones (*holds his hands before his eyes*). Ay, nevertheless! — younger — fresher — healthier — (*lets his hand descend with a blow on the table, and burns his eyes into those of ANDREA*). Andrea — drink!

*Andrea (alarmed, but with feigned firm bearing).* — I drink to your health and to your good fortune. You artists are really to be envied. (*Smiles.*)

*Tintoretto.* — To a certain degree, to that point where you idlers interfere with your paltry pleasures!

*Andrea (drawing himself up).* — How, master Robusti! (*Controlling himself, observes carelessly*) We are of flesh and blood, we all — and you not the least so! Do you wish to keep all the game to yourself? (*Stingingly.*) You will have to share, anyhow!

*Tintoretto (lifts himself a little from his chair, seats himself again, eyeing him).* — If I only cared to — yes, I do. Once in your little, idle life shall you hear an artist's declaration of faith. Even if you mean to caricature that — the question is, whether there will be an opportunity.

*Andrea (about to rise).* — There is no opportunity for me to listen to you. I am expected!

*Tintoretto (slaps him on his knee).* — You stay here and listen to me. Being an 'old man,' I am a little garrulous, but, at any rate, you will not have better society than mine — there where you are being expected!

*Andrea (biting his lips).* — You have locked me in — but to-morrow you will hear from me!

*Tintoretto (laughs).* — Oh, to-morrow! (*Rises, goes to the door, tries the lock, returns, stands in front of him.*) You are a dilettante. You busy yourself a little with the chalk — you can draw a contour — imitate a grimace — you are musical — you can write a tolerable sonnet — and you can whisper beautiful ladies veiled things into their open ears! You are handsome, young, aristocrat, convivial at the gambling table, you cultivate *that* art to say something witty about everything and everybody, and people laugh, they pay your debts, in fact, they say that the beautiful ladies are not unwilling to pay for *those* favors which the spoiled young Andrea Balbi bestows upon the ladies of Venice — erstwhile so high spirited! In truth: an admirable specimen of the kind! And *you* caricature *me*.

*Andrea (shrinking before his eye, but with awakening defiance).* — That is the Tintoretto who declared he was so high above small criticism!

*Tintoretto.* — Ah, criticism! That *we* artists exercise among ourselves the great as well as the small. And there is no hatred between us.



*Andrea.*— But now you turn all your hate on your former friend, because he has permitted himself a jest.

*Tintoretto.*— Jest as much as you please. It is not *that*. (*Nearer, close to him.*) You took her from me — my model — my beautiful Laetizia!

*Andrea* (*leans as far back as possible in his chair, without meeting his glance, and without answering.*)

*Tintoretto.*— I have applied a salve to the wound — work, and work again — but it is smarting yet. If it is to be healed altogether, the surgeon's fee must be paid in full. I should think you know me!

*Andrea* (*with altogether forced calmness, quietly.*)— Your mistress deserted you. Such things happen. Is it *my* fault? It may happen to me myself when I — when I become ——

*Tintoretto.*— Older!

*Andrea* (*shrugs his shoulders.*)— I have the advantage of youth — as yet.

*Tintoretto.*— And you had the laugh on me — until now! (*Turns on his heel, walks to and fro, stops.*) Do you *know* what your and her laughter robbed me of? A mistress? Oh! Your eyes that are said to be so dangerous to women, they dare not laugh now, but they smile the word up into my face: my mistress! (*Laughs.*) The great Tintoretto was robbed by the little Balbi of the favors of his lady — the deuce! let him seek other arms to rock to sleep his longings by night, to captivate his senses by day — what? That is *your* opinion!

*Andrea* (*with a fine smile.*)— My opinion is this: The halls and chambers of Venice stand open to you, master, by day as well as by night. You will meet nothing but tenderness in high and low!

*Tintoretto* (*mockingly.*)— There is *your* weakness. (*Toward him, sternly.*) But the model — what shall we do about the model, boy?

*Andrea.*— You call me a dilettante! At any rate, I know *so* much of art that I can perceive lines, colors, forms — beautiful full forms all about me — the choice is left to you, master! (*Makes a large, sweeping movement of the arm toward the window.*) Soon it is night, and on every couch in Venice, whether on silken pillows or on straw, billow white bodies of women. Only choose! You are famous — you are wealthy — you are an artist. You can have models and mistresses by the hundreds. (*Teasingly.*) Why then be so particular and miserly with the poor little Balbi?

*Tintoretto* (*has gone to a distance, stands by the canvas-screen, looks at him from there.*)— Voluptuary!

*Andrea* (*rises, groping after his cloak and sword.*)— I will stand no more, master Robusti! To-morrow my friends will appear here, but if you intend

foul play against me this evening — have a care: *I* am nearer to the law than you! (*About to go.*)

*Tintoretto* (*without changing position, thunders*) — Stay where you are! Here *I* am at home, and here only *my* law prevails!

*Andrea* (*steps back, leaning on the back of a chair, winds his cloak about his left arm, gnashing his teeth*).— I have run into a trap! But I do not fear your big words — as little as I was overawed by your great brushes!

*Tintoretto* (*without paying attention to his rage, restrained*).— You shall have my artist's declaration of faith with you — there where you yourself are going as a dilettante. And then say not that I have shown myself a niggard. My lifelies in my work — but in order to work I must love. *I live* in that beauty which you and your likes are defiling. If you perceive the naked, whether in the work of art or in the model, then you see with eyes that never were disciplined in art. The chance model — her I can find everywhere, just as you your chance mistress. You leave her when your pleasure is sated; I leave the model, indifferent and calm, when my eye rests, or my work is completed. But if I *love* my model — and she is taken from me, then I am restless, unable to work, torn away from what gave nourishment to my life, devotion to my art — that breath from a world which *you* never have drunk in. I must love the woman I paint so that my work shall not become a meaningless handicraft, the tavern-sign for the loose habits of life of *your* likes! If there is love between my model and me, it will be felt by every one who dearly loves a woman. *You* see a bosom, an arm, a voluptuous body — but all they who belong to each other in more than in the intoxication of the senses, they hear, see, and perceive in the work of art *that* rare perfume, that pure note, that billowing melody of adoration and devotion, in which limb joins limb in harmony — whilst there flows a smile, as it were, over the lustre of the skin, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet. Thus paint I, thus compose I my adoration into the beautiful body! Nature gave it to me, in all her day-bright gladness at what she herself produced through the union of man with woman. Now it is *mine*, this work of love and gladness. She smiles at me — the resting woman there — her secrets are mine — she gave me them without thinking of being repaid, and I repay with the highest art I am capable of! How empty, how meaningless, how ugly, if that smile were bought with favors and gifts, obtained by enticements, or hard cash! How sad, how disappointed — what devouring privation for the man who sees that place empty — there before him! My life lies in my work, but in order to work I must love. *That* is the youth in my old age, that is the pulse-throb of my blood, that is the freshness in my art. (*Advances toward him.*) Woe to him who will make me old!



*Andrea* (between fear and defiant hate).— What do you mean to say with all your tirades? I say to you: Madonna Laetizia was unfaithful to you of her own accord, and by her own promptings. She met me halfway!

(Holds his arm, with the cloak around it against him, in parrying attitude.)

*Tintoretto* (tears the cloak from him and throws it on the floor).— You lie! You and she — you have both lied to my face!

*Andrea*.— I swear — by my honor — by all I myself revere.

*Tintoretto* (unsheathing his sword).— Swear then, you wretch, that that child whom I myself intended to revere in this house — that she, this poor hunted girl, also is a Lady Laetizia who has not served your depravity — without your having enticed her! Swear — and go to — (Circling his sword above ANDREA's head.)

*Andrea*.— Help! (Starts toward the window.)

*Tintoretto* (with a leap between him and the window).— If you do not hold your tongue, I shall nail you to the wall like a hornet!

*Andrea* (draws his sword).— You Satan! You shall not butcher me.

*Tintoretto*.— You forget that it was I who taught you to fence — boy! (Knocks the sword out of his hand.)

*Andrea* (deadly pale, trembling).— Hear me — that girl — I had no power over her —

*Tintoretto* (letting his sword circle constantly before his face and chest).— Lies — lies! I know your eyes — she too! How should she not have succumbed to you?

*Andrea*.— Robusti! hear me — I swear to you — forgive me — Oh! (TINTORETTO has pierced his shoulder.)

*Tintoretto* (laughs wildly).— I forgive you — the caricatures — the brushes — your sarcasms! — forgive you also Laetizia — I shall make my reckoning with her myself — but that you have taken that child from me — (hits him again).

*Andrea*.— Spare my life! She is —

*Tintoretto*.— Too good to be defiled! But you shall be branded in your pale face — so long as you live!

*Andrea* (with a cry).— My eye!

*Tintoretto* (pulls his sword out).— The evil eye!

*Andrea* (drops).— Ah! I die! I speak the truth — she is —

*Tintoretto* (resting his sword-point on the floor).— Your last lie! (leans over him — examines him — says lightly) That was not even my intention. (Turns with a shrug of his shoulder.) One Balbi more or less! (Calls out, but not loudly) Filippo!

*The Armenian (outside).— My lord!*

*Tintoretto.— Who there? Who there? (Goes to the door.)*

*Armenian.— He whom you summoned hither!*

*Tintoretto (quickly casts his cloak over ANDREA, unlocks the door).— Ah, it is you, venerable scoundrel!*

*Armenian (advances, looking about him with his silent, earnest smile, pointing to the floor).— What have you there?*

*Tintoretto.— A resting model.*

*Armenian.— You are somewhat strenuous, your worship, with your models.*

*Tintoretto.— Do not talk about things that do not concern you — but hand me what you have!*

*Armenian (in his measured way, hands him a little package carefully wrapped up). Peace be with you, my lord!*

*Tintoretto (takes the wrapper from a little bottle, looks at it and lets it glide into his bosom).— This, then, is the right drink?*

*Armenian (nods significantly).— The right drink for the proper use!*

*Tintoretto (gives him money).— There!*

*Armenian (weighs the glittering gold coins in his hand).— That is far too much, my lord!*

*Tintoretto.— That depends! Take care that I demand nothing back!*

*Armenian.— Peace be with you! Good fortune in your undertakings, peace with your models! (Exit.)*

*Filippo (enters, looking after the ARMENIAN and at TINTORETTO).— You called for me, master?*

*Tintoretto.— And good speed you made!*

*Filippo.— It was because Teresina and I could not agree.*

*Tintoretto.— You have no business with Teresina. You and I have business with him there! (Uncovers ANDREA.)*

*Filippo.— But, master! Balbi? How did that happen?*

*Tintoretto.— Now he wanders to the fish; come!*

*Filippo (whilst they are lifting the corpse and carrying it to the side window).— Did you two have a duel, master?*

*Tintoretto (laughs).— With him?*

*Filippo.— I owe him the bloody nose I got to-day. Now he bleeds himself — from his eye and his nose. How he is gashed!*

*Tintoretto.— I meant to caricature him — put some marks on his pretty figure and smooth face so that he should not boast of too many victories. But then I grasped the brush too strongly — and he himself drove it into his eye!*

*(They lift him up on the window-sill and let him fall out. A dull splash is heard.)*

*Filippo*.— Adieu — and greet the other fishes! (*Both listen a moment.*)  
I do not hear any barque passing!

*Tintoretto*.— And supposing one did pass! It is not so rare an occurrence, in Venice, that a man drops into a canal by night. (*Takes up his hat, cloak, and sword.*)

*Filippo*.— Where will you go, master? Let me get my sword and follow you.

▶ *Tintoretto*.— I go alone — on a visit — to bid a beautiful lady good night! Now I am in fitting good humor.

*Filippo*.— Oh, let me follow you! You look as black as night itself!

*Tintoretto*.— That suits my errand. You stay here and hold your tongue — no one leaves the house — but all is to be made ready for supper — a festive supper, with lights and wine and song when I return! (*Exit.*)

*Filippo* (*looks after him, vexed*).— He might as well let me have *that* amusement. (*Goes to the side window, leans out, and says softly*). Ho, there! (*Listens.*) No, all is silent down there. Master knows how to close people's mouths! (*Going from the window.*) My, but won't *he* be missed on the Rialto! (*With a little hop.*) Santo Diavolelto, meanwhile Giulio is making up to our little girl, up there. (*Runs to the door.*)

*Teresina* (*enters, followed by GIULIO.*)

*Filippo* (*with outspread arms, jestingly*).— My little Teresina!

*Teresina* (*pushing him aside*).— Go away, you!

*Giulio* (*advancing toward him*).— You have no right to touch her!

*Filippo*.— But you, perhaps?

*Giulio*.— Yes!

*Filippo*.— And why?

*Giulio*.— Because I am eleven months and five days older than you, and can draw much better than you —

*Filippo*.— And I can fight better than you.

*Teresina* (*getting out of the way*).— Why don't you begin right away? (*Slips.*) Oh! the floor is so smooth!

*Giulio*.— I suppose it is the water yet from the time you changed your dress. *Filippo*, make a light, and get me the rags!

*Filippo* (*evasively*).— It is not yet worth while to make a light — the rags lie here behind the door! (*Runs out, returns, falls to scrubbing and scouring the floor where ANDREA lay, then rises.*) So now! Now those spots are away. (*With a bow to TERESINA.*) From to-morrow it is the little princess' turn to tidy up in the house!

*Teresina*.— From to-morrow? (*Goes to the large window, seats herself*



*with a little sigh, looks at the evening sky, resting her chin in her hand.*) There is something heavy in the air this evening!

*Filippo.*— Yes, that means rain! (*Laughs.*) The clouds are tinged with darkest red — and poorly gilded. ‘All is mean and shabby in beautiful Venice — we will hang our heads!’ (*Laughs.*) But I say it is glorious to be in Venice! That is, if one does not talk too loudly about certain things, does not twaddle about public affairs, or quarrel with the priests or our high government, why, then one can do what one pleases. One can have the best of wine — and at cheap price, the best master to be apprenticed to, and one can get up a first-class free fight! But the best of all, after all, are the pretty girls of Venice! (*Tries to embrace TERESINA, laughing.*)

*Teresina (tears herself loose).*— I rather like you — you are so merry. But now I tell you once for all; these hands are used to handle a barque, have a care!

*Filippo.*— Let’s see! They are neither horny nor tarry — but *I* think that you two are confoundedly tedious. I shall run out, now, to get supper ready. These days one must be both butler and cook, waiter and servant — no matter! (*slaps his chest*) if one only knows that one *is* painter. (*Kisses his fingertips to TERESINA.*) To-morrow it is your turn — little fisher-maid! (*Exit.*)

*Teresina.*— To-morrow! (*To GIULIO who is looking at her.*) How comes it — this sadness that steals upon one? Is it always so in this house?

*Giulio.*— Formerly it was different. Master has had some annoyances — but he will soon change, how can he help it?

*Teresina (to herself).*— How angrily he looked at me, as he went!

*Giulio.*— Impossible!

*Teresina.*— Alas! (*Bends her head.*)

*Giulio.*— But what is troubling you, dear child?

*Teresina (without listening to him, looking out of the window).*— I long —

*Giulio (sympathetic).*— For what?

*Teresina (as before).*— For my old honest, simple father.

*Giulio.*— Did you love him much?

*Teresina.*— He was surely the only one who loved me, for my own sake.

*Giulio.*— We will all be kind to you!

*Teresina.*— He was kind to me, and I never could as much as thank him!

*Giulio (quietly).*— Do not think of that now!

*Teresina.*— And my beautiful sea. (*Half arising and extending her arms.*) You beautiful, great, dark, deep sea! (*Speaking without turning*

to GIULIO.) Now the sun is about to set — yet he lies and shines like a little bright spark on the water — and now it is extinguished — and now the lamp is lit for Madonna. Out there over the lagune. And the nightwind comes, and the clouds hang low with heavy fringes of fire, and the barques of the fishermen go under shortened sails. But the light in the lamp burns quietly for the Madonna of the fishermen — Madonna of the Pile. *My own little red lamp! Good night, world!*

*Giulio (has seized his lute, on which he strikes a couple of accompanying chords, quietly).—* Why, Teresina — you are an improvisatora —

*Teresina (without listening to him, half speaking to him, half to herself).* — Do you know, that it must be beautiful to rest out there in the still deep water — there where my old father long since has found his rest? For Madonna is watching over us! And do you know what father told me — when I sat with him in his barque — and tended the sails, or rowed for him, whilst he put his nets in order? He said, that deep down among the sea-grass, where Madonna stands high on the Pile, deep down there grows the white water-lily, the holy flower, and whosoever sinks down in innocence, and kisses the flower, shall live forever! That father told me, and his old, honest eyes beamed on me, and the little red light shone for us both, out there over the sea. And I folded my wet, cold hands. And father said: just as there are evil eyes, there are also good ones that look upon us! And just as there are evil powers, there are also good ones that watch over us! And in *that* place it was he was drowned — in a squall! (*Turning to GIULIO.*) How angrily your lord and master looked at me, as he left! What must he think of me?

*Giulio (lays down his lute, comforting).—* Only good — only good — Teresina!

*Teresina (shaking her head).—* Alas it will not do for me to tell *him* how it was — and ask me he will neither, I suppose! He has his own cares. (*Suddenly tosses her head.*) And *why* should I? Have I ever stood in need of any one? Let them keep their eyes to themselves! What are *you* looking at me for, silly boy? Do you also want to paint me? (*Pushes away the hand he offers her.*) I shall go away from all of you — I feel it, I cannot live in this air!

*Giulio (has again taken up his lute, sits still, bent over it, picks out chords).*

*Teresina (looks at him for a moment, lowers her voice again).—* Perhaps I do you wrong. You are so very young — hardly older than I. I will tell you something!

*Giulio (looks up, nods).*

*Teresina.*— I believe, something evil is threatening me.

*Giulio (quickly).*— Oh, do not believe that.

*Teresina.*— Ah, yes. It has been threatening long, but here it will come over me. I will pass away quickly. No one will miss me — a poor lonely child!

*Giulio.*— No, no, you will stay here, to our joy, for we all love you so very much! You are so young, and healthy, and beautiful!

*Teresina (shaking her head, friendlier).*— My little sister, she caught the fever, became like a glowing brand, and an hour afterwards she was cold and dead!

*Giulio.*— Oh, *why* did not you change dress at once?

*Teresina (smiles sadly).*— It is not *that*. Listen now: when I am here no longer — you shall tell him.

*Giulio.*— Whom?

*Teresina.*— In this house there is but one.

*Giulio (softly).*— Master!

*Teresina (nods).*— You shall tell him — that he must not think ill of me — that I was — that I am — no, you shall thank him, because he saved me before evil eyes got power over me. You shall tell him about the white waterflower — the one I will kiss. That you shall tell him — in a good hour, when he has not that fold in his brow (*softly, hesitating*), when he perhaps has made up again with the fine lady, whom — whom — he now went to visit!

*Giulio.*— But what are you saying, child! And who can have told you?

*Teresina.*— Don't you believe that a child of Venice gets to hear of all that Venice so long has been gossiping about?

*Giulio.*— Master went to seek the Armenian who is to put his price on the valuables there — he will be here again, directly!

*Teresina (quietly).*— Your master went — and he will return when he has done what he went out to do. Why should *he* not succeed?

*Giulio.*— But the supper — that should be gotten ready for *us* — festively!

*Teresina.*— The right one will surely not be lacking at the feast — and I will sit in my room!

*Giulio.*— The right one? (*Looks sympathetically at her.*) Ah, *Teresina!* (*Turns from her and lets his fingers touch his lute.*)

*Teresina (takes his hand).*— Well, then, you will tell him what I have told you! But will you be able to remember it — exactly? Suppose he should not return soon — perhaps only to-morrow! (*Urgently, with pained voice.*) Write down — write down!



*Giulio (wistfully preluding on his lute).*— I have a method of writing down; *that* keeps one from forgetting. If you really should become sick — very sick — we shall nurse you. And when he then will sit in your room, I shall tell him all that you prayed me tell him. I shall put it together — thus: that you were a poor, lonely child that grew up in rowing for your father in his boat, and helped him with his sail and nets. It was his glance that watched over you, and that sheltered you from all the treachery of Venice. For there are evil eyes, but what avail they against the good ones?

*Teresina (wistful).*— Yes — right! So it is!

*Giulio.*— And if you — no, *that* we will not believe at all — but *if* you should be called away soon (*softly and moved*), you die in innocence — and sink down to Madonna, in whom your heart believed, and there you will kiss the white lily growing among the seagrass. (*With concluding chords and recitative.*)

Who trusts in her, not perishes *he*:

I know that evil powers there be —

What avail they 'gainst the good ones?

*Teresina (nods and says slowly).*— Yes — yes! (*Presses his hand quietly.*) Thanks! Now I breathe easier in here — now it will be easier for me — yes! now I shall be able to await it — calmly, quietly —

*Giulio.*— Dear — dear Teresina, be sad now no longer!

*Teresina (interrupts).*— I am not sad, I am calm. (*Arises, cheerfully.*) Now we shall spread the table for supper together!

*Filippo (comes bouncing in, with his arms full of dishes).*— Pronto! — ready! Now let the old man come when he will.

*Teresina.*— He is not old!

*Filippo.*— Oh, we only say so, in our slang.

*Teresina.*— Come, let me! (*She takes dishes, table linen, decanters, etc., from him; they help each other in spreading the table in the foreground to the left.*)

*Giulio.*— Lights we must have — and the chandelier lit up there — but no shade over it, as when we draw.

*Teresina.*— Lights — real many lights! How dusty all is here! (*Wipes off the dust.*)

*Filippo.*— Stand aside, Teresina! Or I shall spill this dish.

*Teresina.*— Clumsy! (*Tasting of one of the saucers.*) Where did you buy these olives?

*Filippo.*— At Giuseppe Felicé's, here around the corner.

 *Teresina.*— The cheat, the fraud!

*Filippo.*— What — the father of my sweetheart?

*Teresina.*— Try them yourself! (*Stuffs an olive into his mouth.*)

*Giulio.*— I too!

*Filippo.*— Ah, delicious!

*Giulio.*— That stuff!

*Teresina (eating).*— Isn't it so?

*Filippo (also eating).*— He is just talking to please you!

*Giulio (also eating).*— If you have one sweetheart, you surely don't need another one!

*Filippo (stuffing an olive into his mouth).*— As many as I can manage! (*Interrupts himself.*) Master's footsteps on the stairs! Light the candles there in the candelabrum! (*Runs to the door, whilst the two busy themselves at the table.*)

*Tintoretto (enters, throws his cloak to FILIPPO, remains standing).*

*Filippo (asks in low voice).*— Well, master? Did you meet the lady?

*Tintoretto (short, in low voice).*— Left the city! (*Advancing a step.*) It was therefore that he hunted his game in other places! (*Looks toward TERESINA, advances, throws off hat and sword, says gruffly.*) What are you three doing here?

*Giulio.*— Why you yourself, master, said as you left —

*Teresina (with a courtesy).*— The supper is ready, my lord.

*Tintoretto (advances to table).*— I am neither hungry nor thirsty! (*Lifts the lid off a dish.*) What is this?

*Giulio.*— Your favorite dish, quails!

*Tintoretto.*— These are sparrows!

*Teresina.*— They are quails, my lord — try them!

*Tintoretto (with a piercing glance at her).*— When did the poor young girls of Venice eat quails? Or did you eat them at his house?

*Teresina (looks silently, sadly at TINTORETTO. Shakes her head, looks toward GIULIO, and then toward FILIPPO).*

*Tintoretto.*— You have taken great pains to regale yourselves — all three of you. Eat, then, gluttons! I am sated by watching your appetites!

*Giulio (deferentially shoves a chair to the table for him).*— May I pour out wine for you, master?

*Tintoretto.*— You shall sit down. I say — you, Giulio here — Filippo there — and Teresina on the couch.

*Teresina (quietly but positively).*— That seat was not meant for me!

*Tintoretto (laughs forcedly, says coldly).*— Now it is assigned to you — and you will occupy it! To table! (*He remains standing, they seat themselves.*) This evening I myself shall wait on my select society. I have made

the round of Venice — am edified by what I have seen and heard — I feel called to assume the duties of a servant!

*Filippo.*— Then you will not have much joy of your occupation! See how you have frightened these two sparrows there! (*Points to GIULIO and TERESINA.*)

*Tintoretto.*— Right you are, my wag! We will have to cheer them up! (*Pours out wine from the decanters.*) What have we here? Corneigliano! And here is Trevisano wine! and here — Chianti vecchio. That wine can 'wake up the dead' they say. Quick and drink of it, Teresina!

*Teresina* (*looks at him, quietly, frankly.*)— Will you drink to my health, my lord?

*Tintoretto* (*looking at her, slowly pouring out wine — also for himself.*)— A question! Ah, well — I drink to your health in this old dark wine. (*Gazing fixedly at her, while emptying his glass.*) Verily, a good wine, a noble wine! (*Takes a chair, seats himself carelessly on it opposite TERESINA.*) A happy country where it grows. That land is not Venice!

*Filippo* (*shoving a dish over to TINTORETTO and laying a piece on his plate.*)— A little leg of a quail, master — may I?

*Tintoretto* (*eats abstractedly.*)— A fine evening's walk! Pour out a little wine for me, Filippo! How one feels like doing great deeds! Now sleeps Venice. That is to say: not at once. There are yet small, dirty money matters to be adjusted — and there is the chase after women — and there was a marriage just now. I remained standing before the house — a venerable palace. People stood there and gaped with open mouths — and then came the couple under a canopy, and the priests gave their blessing, and then the incense-bearers! A young rich widow — one husband she has under the ground, he does not count — but four living lovers she is sure of. Two of them were present as best men to the groom, and *him* I knew. A handsome figure, dissolute as few, nobleman as most of them, heir to his father's more than questionable transactions — usury, profligacy, foulness! It is hardly to be doubted that I shall have an order from that house, a handsome family portrait, or some sacred allegory! And what brood will be hatched out from such a union — if, indeed, there will be any. And such a spectacle the people applauded, with wide-open mouths. Happy Venice! (*Empties his glass.*)

*Teresina* (*shakes her head, quietly and mildly reproachful.*)— My lord, you do not know the people.

*Tintoretto* (*laughs.*)— I do not know my people? Oh, yes, I do! Stick your head out of the window and you will perceive two kinds of odors: The slimy mold that from the canals creeps up the walls of the palaces, and the



rank smell of oil and fish, when people fry their suppers. There they crowd, talking and eating, in their narrow alleys. If they only have codfish and polenta for the day — what do they mind the slime that devours our state's remnants of magnificence — that moldy magnificence *they themselves* cringe to? I know my people! (*Drinks and sprinkles the remnant on the floor*).— To their welfare!

*Filippo (likewise)*.—A merry people!

*Teresina (lively)*.— Yes, the people's merry, easy-going temper, that they manage to stand life with, without thinking of the oppression that lies heavily on them! Have *you* lived on polenta, my lord? — gone from door to door to borrow flour and grits — sat back to back with misery, and laughed at the puppet-show? Who can laugh as we can? Why will you not learn it of us? What does the slime and dirt concern us? One may see and hear all — and yet not know that it is there!

*Tintoretto (looking at her, pouring out wine to her and himself)*.— There you struck a truth. Well, and?

*Teresina (lifts her glass without looking at him, sips of it)*.— That wine makes one hot! It must have lain a long time — it makes one's blood thick, no doubt. The home-grown wine the people drink makes one light at heart. (*Narrating*.) I know a shoemaker —

*Tintoretto (interrupts, laughing)*.— So — you know a shoemaker? I know half a hundred of them — and they all live alike. They marry early, some healthy lass, amuse themselves with her, so long as she is young, beat her when she has borne him children, then goes to the tavern and lets the brats loaf about — and the boys become good-for-nothings — or gondoliers — the girls sell themselves to the nobili. That's the song, it is soon sung.

*Teresina (undisturbed)*.— I know a shoemaker — he married early, a pretty, merry little girl — and they had many children: and for every child that came he went to church with a taper, and then home to his wife, but not to the tavern. And he swears that she is growing more good-looking all the while — and the children cling to the nest, the boys come there every evening — and they are gondoliers — but not good-for-nothings — and the girls (*looking at him*) are self-respecting, and go to the glass factory!

*Tintoretto (laughs)*.— Really, and they are not yet broken? (*Lifts his glass*.) Depend upon it, Teresina, it will come in time! (*To GIULIO and FILIPPO*.) Let us then drink to the health of this one shoemaker!

*Filippo*.— May he multiply — still more!

*Giulio*.— I drink with Teresina!

*Tintoretto*.— I am really getting an appetite. (*Reaches to one of the dishes*.) What is this? Chickens! with olives! (*Eating*.) Excellent!

*Filippo*.—I have myself bought them at Giuseppe Felice's, but Teresina said they were no good!

*Tintoretto* (to TERESINA).—Do you know my friend Giuseppe? Fine specimen! He is crafty and cringing—bows to his customers who come on account of his pretty wife. She is as Venetian-like unfaithful as possible. — and the girls?—ask Filippo there about his daughters: they are as frail as any glass can be. Your health, Filippo!

*Teresina* (quietly).—I do not know the man you speak of, my lord. But I knew my father. His wife was also unfaithful to him — and he loved her, forgave her, bore with her — he said: It is stronger than herself, one or another diavoletto has prompted her!

*Filippo*.—Ay, the little devils — they swarm and tickle under the skin; one can't scratch them away: to their health!

*Tintoretto*.—You are candid, Teresina. (*Leans over and looks into her eyes.*) It is hereditary — how? — this unfaithfulness?

*Teresina* (meeting his glance, calmly).—My old father was a good and just man. He, perhaps, had a mind temptations could not enter. So he could pardon the easier.

*Tintoretto* (irritatingly).—But your mother, my little dove? Her we do not mention — how?

*Teresina* (low, to herself).—They say she was beautiful — that said they all! (*Adding.*) God knows if one heard *that* every day. (*Nods and says to herself, with special emphasis.*) She was not self-respecting enough!

*Tintoretto* (lifts his glass, looks scrutinizingly over it at TERESINA, takes a swallow, nudges GIULIO somewhat angrily).—There you are sitting and gaping, boy! Will you also imitate people's open mouths or have you entirely lost your speech about her there? Draw her, paint her, court her, and malign me in her eyes; and go the straight way to find the bottom of *that* abyss of the people — I have become too old to let myself be fooled by! (*Brusquely to TERESINA.*) Well, what are you thinking about?

*Teresina* (chuckling).—If you, my lord, were a pretty little girl of the street — a beautiful young wife in a mechanic's shop — how would your thoughts run? (*Interrupts herself, bowing her head.*) Pardon my poor understanding, master Tintoretto!

*Tintoretto* (supporting his chin on his hand).—Yes, they know how to ingratiate themselves — all of them — high and low! (*Passing his hand over his brow.*) Folly! (*Rises, walks some steps up and down.*) The devil has created women for the ruin of men, and not least of artists!

*Filippo*.—That was a true word, master!

*Giulio (shakes his head, looks at TERESINA, who lets her glance sweep to the large window).*

*Tintoretto (goes to the side window, looks out and down — returns).—* We sit here and prate about nothing. What is a little girl, what a fine lady, what are the people, what the whole? (*With a movement of his hand.*) It is a period of decline, the height was reached long ago — we fall, all of us. Art as the last. But it will soon be felt, it also will become rotten. The entire marrow of the times is poisoned, and we talk, drink wine, and lie to one another. By God! I have held my head up as an artist, and I shall not knuckle down, not yet! A hundred faults I have, which one can discover and abuse. But as artist I wake and pray till late at night. And about me all is asleep. (*Sits himself, leaning back in his chair.*) Venice displays its flags on holidays and weekdays. No one believes any longer in its strength, but you must not say it! The state is governed by bureaucrats, who are moss-covered from the cap of the Doge to the toe of the secretary. No breath of air — no fresh movement, no achievement. To the uppermost layers the mold reaches — and down there — there the people are still laughing, as Teresina says, laughing and borrowing polenta from one another, and let the morass spread. And in that air art is to live! (*Laughs loud, pours out a glass of wine and empties it.*) Long live art! (*Looking at TERESINA*) whilst the people die!

*Teresina (looking at him, says).—* If no one believes in the people, and no one takes up its cause — why then —

*Tintoretto.—* Drink, boys! Do not listen to what she says. It would be better for her if she was not! But that her innocent wisdom does not know.

*Giulio.—* Alas, master, how you speak to-night! And that was to be the glad feast — the feast at your return and Teresina's arrival?

*Tintoretto.—* Why, then, make it glad — so long as it lasts! Play and sing! (*Scornful.*) We have food and wine, a young girl's society, and our susceptible hearts — we artists — he?

*Giulio (shaking his head).—* I cannot —

*Tintoretto.—* Whimpering Night! Then you, Filippo of the day!

*Filippo (jumps up).—* At last I may, then. I have made a Song at Table! to be sung between courses.

*Tintoretto.—* And now we have eaten them all at once! Sing out freely about food and wine, the best you can. Who knows whether we see the day again, its sun and its dirt, its glory and its misery?

*Filippo (laughs).—* I know it! (*Sings.*)



## SONG AT TABLE

I praise me the day, its dirt and its sun,  
 Ne'er like an ostrich will I run,  
 Stick my head in a bush, and die!  
 I live and I live, will let nothing annoy me.  
 Will select and reject, and with all things enjoy me,  
 And comes then my hour, oh, well, then I die:  
*After the feast, not before will I!*

*Tintoretto (nodding, with a glance at TERESINA).—*

*After the feast, not before will I.*

Lo! the table is covered with food and with wine,  
 Who but a fool would now decline,  
 Sit there embarrassed, and chide and greet?  
 Our Lord, believe me, scarce deems to be vicious  
 To our stomachs and mouths what seems so delicious:  
 And if it meant death: O grape so sweet,  
 If thou art poisoned, then poison is sweet!

*Tintoretto.—* If thou art poisoned, then poison is sweet!

Come chicken and quail, come lights and feasts gay!  
 For I am invited as guest for the day —  
 Meant, implicitly, 'for the night.'  
 In joyous feasting away, ere we know of it,  
 Soon vanishes the day and the glow of it;  
 Awake I at night, I think it is light:  
 Sweetheart! it is your bosom so white!

*All Three.—* Sweetheart! it is your bosom so white!

*Tintoretto.—* Eviva — the delights of the table, the serving up of all life! (*to TERESINA*). Your health, my little peasant girl — for really, you are a little peasant girl from the mountains!

*Teresina.—* Do you see that only now, my lord?

*Tintoretto.—* I saw it so soon as you had changed dress, but that time I sought your eyes, and I looked into them and said: do not deceive me! Now I look at you as if you were the little girl up at the chalet in the Alps of Friuli — and her I left as I had met her — although she was almost as beautiful and shapely as you!

*Teresina (looks calmly into his eyes; his face assumes a mocking expression — then his glance becomes unsteady — finally he turns it from her).*

*Giulio.*— Then you did not love her, master!

*Tintoretto.*— Blockhead! Love? When one is in my age? (*Drumming his fingers on the table.*)

*Filippo (winking at GIULIO).*— They say that great Titian got himself a beautiful mistress — when he was more than sixty years — her whom he is always painting.

*Tintoretto (bobbing his head).*— They say, and they say — save your wisdom! (*His glance becomes softer, he lifts his glass, sips, slowly nodding to TERESINA, who likewise sips, and then looks down with bowed head.*)

*Giulio.*— Relate, master!

*Tintoretto.*— There is nothing to relate!

*Giulio.*— Oh, yes, there is! When you sent the first box with your pictures here, there lay in it the costume which Teresina now wears. Was the girl from the ch<sup>â</sup>let really as beautiful as —

*Tintoretto (interrupts him).*— Basta! (*Rests his chin on his hand, looks into the light on the table; the play of his features is changing from forced indifference, repressed doubt and scorn, until there is spread over his features a glory of beautiful memories, as it were. Then he says*) I had ascended a mountain before dawn and almost reached the ch<sup>â</sup>lets, the small Alpine huts, when the sun burst forth. I sat down, tired, and yet strengthened by the glorious pure air that makes one ten years younger — wiser by a generation, better by a whole life. And it was as if a new life entered into my soul. I felt disgusted at the low morass in which I had slaved during my best years, under women's yoke, under the whip of ambition, in a world that profanes art, love, manly deed — and I wished never to descend from that mountain. In front of me the last ledge, a wild rocky defile, before the mountain pasture spread out its quiet green expanse with the simple huts on it. From the rocky defile there plunged forth a waterfall — with blue shadows over its foam-wreaths, and a single sheer rock towered up into the bright air, fanned by the healthy breeze of morn, and over the towering giant the sun poured its golden-red glory, and the rock became a speaking Titan with the glow of consecration in his speech:

Seekest thou nature? Thyself become nature!

*Giulio (with shining eyes).*— Yes — master — yes!

*Tintoretto.*— And then there came down a young girl from the ch<sup>â</sup>lets above. I looked at her, she was fresh, in buxom health, and shapely. I spoke with her — and she seemed to me wise, with all her arch simplicity —

resolute and bashful, frank and outspoken, because she had had no dealings with cunning. It seemed to me as if *she* could teach me more than *I* her. And I said to myself: remain up here with her. Leave the grand ladies, the grand pleasures, the grand society, the grand paintings. Paint her — paint nature — become happy! (*He stops, looking before himself; then his eye seeks TERESINA and the soft glow again settles on his face.*)

*Filippo.*— Well, master — and what became of it?

*Tintoretto (slightly provoked).*— That became of it — that I let the girl go her way — and bought the dress from her mother. Doubts assailed me!

*Teresina (with folded hands).*— My lord! I beseech you — leave Venice — go back to the mountains — (*heartfelt*) oh, do!

*Tintoretto (asks earnestly).*— That you say? *You?* (*Quietly, almost tenderly.*) What would become of you?

*Teresina (calm).*— I will be cared for!

*Tintoretto (looks at her, dwelling on his words, shoves his glass aside, and lays his hand over hers).*— If I now went there — and took you along?

*Teresina (with a quick, gleaming glance).*— Oh, my lord!

(*Some loud knocks from the knocker below are heard.*)

*Tintoretto (angrily).*— What now? *Filippo!* (*another knock*) go down and see what it can be at this time! (*FILIPPO exit hurriedly.*)

*Tintoretto (rises, stands by the side of TERESINA, stroking her hair thoughtfully — goes back to the door).*

*Filippo (enters, laughing).*— It is a lubber of a servant — a nine-ply ass. He says he has a letter to Signor Balbi.

*Tintoretto (quickly).*— Balbi?

*Filippo.*— Yes, to be delivered to Signor Andrea with his own hands. (*Laughs.*) That will be rather difficult!

*Tintoretto (severely, frowning).*— Fool! bring him in.

*A servant (enters).*

*Tintoretto.*— Who are you, and what do you wish?

*Servant (dumfounded).*— I don't know!

*Tintoretto.*— You have a letter? Hand it to me!

*Servant.*— Naw, my lady handed me a letter this morning — before she left — and charged me to look up Signor Balbi — wherever I might find him, and hand him this letter with my own hand.

*Tintoretto.*— Well — and?

*Servant.*— And so I have been looking for him all day — until I heard in the neighborhood that he had gone up here — and not come out again!

*Filippo.*— A confounded lie!



*Tintoretto*.— Silence! (*To servant.*) You give me the letter, I shall attend to it.

*Servant*.— No, I darsn't! (*Hides the letter behind his back.*)

*Filippo* (*snatches it from him and gives it to TINTORETTO*).

*Servant*.— Oh, my Lady Laetizia will kill me!

*Tintoretto*.— Throw him out! (*GIULIO has jumped up; he and FILIPPO throw the servant out; both back quickly. TERESINA has arisen, and looks anxiously at TINTORETTO.*)

*Tintoretto* (*goes to the opposite side, tears the letter open, reads mumbling*). — 'I leave the city now. They tell me that he is coming — and I wish to avoid an unpleasant meeting. Do likewise, my beloved Andrea. Avoid the bulldog! Laetizia.' (*Stands silent for a moment, crumbling the letter in his clenched hand — laughs.*) The bulldog! (*Goes quickly to the window on the left, tears the letter to pieces, and throws it out, murmuring.*) Find the addressee in the mud! (*Returns, walks up and down. His brow is gloomy, the vein between his eyebrows becomes apparent. He lifts his fist — gesticulates, murmuring. GIULIO and FILIPPO have returned; they stand by TERESINA, all three erect, in anxious silence. Suddenly there is heard from afar very faintly — a sound of instruments. FILIPPO looks over to the large window in the background, and makes sign to TERESINA who is beginning to listen.*)

*Tintoretto* (*stopping in his walk up and down*).— That was a message from the world that is. I was beginning to dream of another. (*The sound of instruments approaches, and the light of torches and Chinese lanterns is cast up from below through the window and on the ceiling.*) What's this?

*Teresina* (*as if relieved by the interruption, with a transport of joy, runs to the window in the background*).— Oh, it is the gondoliers!

*Giulio* (*likewise*).— It is master's serenade!

*Filippo* (*likewise*).— What — a serenade?

*Tintoretto* (*remaining standing alone at the table*).— Children and fools' tricks! — but that child shall not deceive me — (*extends his hand for TERESINA's glass — draws it back hesitatingly, and unconsciously listens to the song from below.*)

*The VOICE of the GONDOLIER sings after a prelude.*

#### SERENADE

Silently the oarblade flashes,  
Like a fish through silvery water dashes,  
In the fair smile of the moon.

Gondola arched like a lovers' abode,  
Carrying two —  
Ha-ïo, then row,  
Gondoliers, row away!

*Chorus of gondoliers:*

The night is long,  
Short our song:  
Row away, gondoliers, row away!

*The Voice:*

Lights from every palace streaming,  
Through the feasts the boat is swimming,  
Somber, like a floating tomb.  
After each covering bridge's arch  
Sigh the two,  
Ha-ïo, then row,  
Gondoliers, row away!

*Chorus:*

The night is long,  
Short our song:  
Row away, gondoliers, row away.

*The Voice:*

From the masks and from the feasting.  
From the lights and merry jesting,  
And the prow turned toward death's gate:  
Under the arching bridge of despair,  
Bridge of Sighs —  
Ha-ïo, then row,  
Gondoliers, row away!

*Chorus:*

The night is long.  
Short our song:  
Row away, gondoliers, row away!

*The Voice:*

There the bliss of rest is certain,  
Under death's shadowing curtain,  
Far from falsely smiling moon.

After th' eternal longing's abode  
 Sigh the two —  
 Ha-ïo, then row,  
 Gondoliers, row away!

*Chorus:*

The night is long,  
 Ended our song:  
 Row away, gondoliers, row away!

*The CHORUS and the sound of the instruments dies away in the distance.*

*Teresina.*— Alas! how sadly they sing! (*Leans against the window-post, waving her hand.*)

*Giulio.*— That they must always sing about death in Venice!

*Tintoretto (at the table).*— And rightly! (*Quickly takes up the little bottle from his breast — pours its contents into TERESINA's glass, which he fills with wine; then he fills also the glasses of the others and his own, and says*) Let them strum along the shining palaces without knowing themselves what they are singing! Now let us empty the last glass. Come, children!

(*TERESINA, GIULIO, and FILIPPO go back to their places; at a sign by TINTORETTO they seize their glasses and set them to their mouths — while standing.*)

*Teresina (hesitating, with a glance at TINTORETTO's tense, gloomy features).*— I wonder if I can stand this heavy wine, my lord?

*Filippo (hums, merrily).*—

'Our Lord believe me, scarce deems to be vicious  
 To our stomachs and mouths what seems so delicious,'

quick! and empty! (*Finishes his glass, the others likewise.*)

*Giulio (beseechingly).*— Master, now we will forget all unpleasant things — not so?

*Tintoretto (quietly, a little sadly, looking at TERESINA).*— Now, we will forget!

*Teresina (putting her hands to her temples).*— Your wine — Tintoretto — was — too — heavy!

*Tintoretto.*— Sit down, child!

*Teresina (sits down on the couch — after a little while her head sinks back).*— Oh!

*Filippo (laughing).*— Should our little fisher and peasant girl have become a little ——



*Tintoretto*.— Silence, boy!

*Teresina*.— It is becoming so dark here. I hardly see you any longer, my lord. (*Lifts her head, but lets it sink again,— faintly*) A drop of water!

*Giulio* (*sympathizing, looking for the water decanter*).— I thought as much — the cold bath was too much for her.

*Teresina* (*whispering*).— Good night, world! (*Sinks wholly back.*)

*Tintoretto* (*places himself behind her head — earnest, making a strong effort to appear composed*).— Good night, *Teresina*, my little beautiful dream!

*Giulio* (*anxiously*), *bending over her*.— But — master —

*Tintoretto* (*opens his hand, in which he had concealed the small bottle — lets it fall on the floor*).

*Giulio* (*on his knees, with a cry, holds his hands before his eyes*).— O God!

*Filippo* (*snatches his glass, looks into it, spits out*).— I certainly do not hope —

*Giulio* (*springs up — lays his hand on his dagger — rushes toward TINTORETTO*).— You have killed her!

*Tintoretto* (*seizes him firmly by the arm — leads him away — says in severe, commanding tone*) — Peace! What I have done I have done for her best — for my own peace! (*Pause.*) Move the table over here — the stools forward — shade over the lamp — the candelabrum there by her head! Thus we will draw our model — draw and sketch in the colors whilst night passes — to-morrow we continue on the painting! — Not a word — get your canvases, chalk, pencils, colors. We shall work here — from the model — the resting model! (*GIULIO and FILIPPO obey automatically; without a word they carry out TINTORETTO's commands; he himself seats himself on a stool before his easel close by the couch on which TERESINA lies; the other two behind him, so that there is formed a group under the glow of the lamp from the ceiling. In the distance, and faintly, are heard instruments and the song from the barque of the serenading gondoliers — which is returning and passes by the window — while TINTORETTO is speaking.*)

*Tintoretto* (*handling the chalk with a firm and sure hand*).— I adopted you both when you were boys, promising to myself to make artists of you — and men. An artist is a man, first of all. At every stage of his life he must know what he can and what he will do. As an artist, I am the bold leader, that all know here. Indefatigably I have worked, and so shall I continue to create, not for money and power, but because I *must*, until I drop. They know also that my aim has been: Michelangelo's form and my teacher

Titian's coloring. What *he* taught me, I have made my own, until I left him and went my own way. No one has crossed it with impunity. (*The music comes a little nearer.*) I came here to-day with a purpose: to kill the woman who was unfaithful to me, who cast doubts and unrest into my soul. I punished her wretch of a lover — shall yet meet her also! But I encountered something weak — that arose between me and my art (*extends his arm with the chalk, pointing to TERESINA*) this weak thing I have crushed, by sending her into eternal night!

*Chorus of the Gondoliers (far away).—*

The night is long,

Short our song:

Row away, gondoliers, row away.

*Tintoretto (who has been speaking abruptly and gruffly to his pupils, now continues with changed intonation, almost to himself).—* Row away — yes! Row over all that opposes the progress of the boat — and do I see the corpse of a little girl — well then: stained she was by the mud — from which I drew her — *what* would her life have become, if she had lived on? — that of a hundred other poor creatures — the life of the weak who perish and draw the strong men down with them into new doubt and bitterness. No! (*continues drawing.*)

*Giulio (letting his hand sink at his work).—* Alas, master!

*Tintoretto (roughly).—* What is it, you whimpering Night? Have I not disciplined you to remain calm when facing death — when I taught you the laws of anatomy on the human body? — and the question *here* is only to preserve the outlines of a fine and beauteous flower — (*softly*) before it decays, and is cast away!

*Giulio (lays down his chalk, holding his hand before his eyes).—* Ah, master — Teresina was —

*Tintoretto (interrupts and turns toward him, saying with impressive earnestness and grandeur).—* Teresina is the most beautiful thing we know of her — now. Do you know more of her than what these outlines, these pale, pure colors tell? Whilst the hours of night are passing, let us make them our own. Had she lived on, she would have lived as a woman — sought by men — weak toward him who was stronger than she, desired by me, who soon is growing so old that desire becomes folly, but not so old that I would not have cursed her — and killed her if she had deceived me! Now she is spared all, she the fine, pure flower, abruptly broken, beautiful in death. We will keep her and paint her picture until the earth claims its

own. And then we shall ferry her over in the barque to the island in the lagoon, the island of the dead, where the breezes of the sea whisper among the sorrowing cypresses — there she shall rest by the sea of her youth — that washes the dust of the good and the evil, and does not ask about offence or guilt that torment *us* with their anxiety and their doubts! (*Lets his hand sink — looks over toward TERESINA — bows his head.*)

*Voice of the Gondolier:*

From the masks and from the feasting,  
From the lights and merry jesting,  
And the prow turned toward death's gate —  
(*The song dies away*)

*Tintoretto (lifts his head, impatient).*— Oh, those gondoliers! (*Seizes his chalk again, and draws.*)

*Giulio (turns from his canvas).*— I cannot — I cannot, master! (*Implovingly.*) Let me play and sing for you and Filippo, whilst the night is passing!

*Tintoretto (quietly).*— Do as you please — if you keep me from hearing that strumming yonder!

*Giulio (then takes up his lute, grasping a few chords).*— Hear what Teresina prayed me tell Tintoretto, in a good hour! (*Prelude.*)

*Tintoretto (exchanges his chalk for palette and brushes, scans TERESINA, then looks toward FILIPPO, who is painting eagerly and imperturbably, begins to lay the colors on the canvas — says in a low voice to GIULIO) — What did she pray you tell? (Paints on.)*

*Giulio (accompanies himself on lute with low, soft voice).*

#### THE POOR CHILD'S SONG

I am a poor and lonely child,  
Grown up in handling sail and net  
    Whilst for my father rowing.  
It was his glance that sheltered me,  
Protected and safeguarded me,  
'Gainst all the craft and treachery  
    That have their home in Venice.  
So let there come, then, what come may:  
    I know that evil eyes there be —  
What avail they 'gainst the good ones!



*Tintoretto (stops working — stares on the ground — then looks at TERESINA: seizes his brush again and paints).*

*Giulio:*

If I may here no longer stay,  
And early I am called away,  
Perhaps before my knowing:  
Then in my innocence I die,  
And by Madonna shall I lie;  
There will I kiss the lily white  
Among the seaweeds growing.  
Who trusts in her, not perishes *he*:  
I know that evil powers there be.  
What avail they 'gainst the good ones!

*Tintoretto (rising slowly — stands a moment staring on the floor — then asks GIULIO quietly).— This she prayed you to tell me?*

*GIULIO (with broken voice, overcome).— They were her own words, master!*

*Tintoretto (steps softly to the couch — lets his hand glide caressingly over TERESINA's brow, whilst he whispers).— I had come to like you too much. (Bending down.) I loved you — you lonely, poor child of the people. You would perhaps have taught me to believe in — to love the people. I, who now will live alone, and be killed limb by limb, in work for the rich.*

*Filippo (has laid his hands on his knees, and in strong emotion looks away from his canvas; GIULIO turns his back — he is heard to sob).*

*Tintoretto (taking a step back, after a tender and loving glance at TERESINA, turned to the two, kindly and firmly).— Children! we must learn this: not to be overcome, not even by death; not even if we ourselves have brought it about! We know not what is best, know only that fate is over us all, and that in art we have a holy thing which we shall serve faithfully with our lives! (Goes back to his seat, propping his hands on his canvas — about to take up his palette again — but looks toward TERESINA — collects himself by a colossal effort of will — says solemnly) When my teacher and master, the great Titian's only daughter had died, his Lavinia, the child of his heart, no lamentation was heard from his lips, whilst the whole great house was weeping and in sorrow. He locked himself in with the dead one, sat by her bedside with colors and brushes, painted day and night, until her picture was completed. And then they buried her with pomp and magnificence — but in his desolate home, in art's high place of honor — he hung the picture of*

her radiant youth. Tintoretto will show himself a worthy pupil of Titian!  
(*Sets himself, seizes his palette, begins to mix his colors.*)

*The Voice of the Gondolier:*

After th' eternal longing's abode  
Sigh the two —  
Ha-ïo then row,  
Gondoliers, row away!

*Tintoretto (lays down his palette — turns away, with his hands over his eyes, concealing his inner sobbing).*

*Giulio (approaches him — bends down — clings to him).— Master!*  
*Filippo (likewise).*

*Tintoretto (embraces them both — in silence — patting their shoulders — then points quietly but peremptorily to their places. They leave him.)*

*Giulio (remains standing for a moment before the couch — tenderly gazing at TERESINA, is startled, leans over her, anxiously, astonished, bursts out).— Master — master! Do come — look!*

*Tintoretto (rising).— What is it? What do you say?*

*Giulio.— She moved!*

*Tintoretto (toward her — seizes her hand — calls her softly, trembling with emotion).— Teresina!*

*TERESINA (turns her head — lifts it slowly, supported by TINTORETTO, opens her eyes — whispers faintly but audibly, looking confidingly at him with a veiled glance).— I believe —*

*Tintoretto (kneeling without letting go of her hand, desperately) — You believe — and I that doubted — I have killed you!*

*Teresina (raises herself halfway — faint — smiling).— I believe — that I have dreamed — so beautiful a dream: That I was yours — and always stayed with you, master — always — always!*

*Tintoretto (pressing her to himself — stormily glad — exclaims loudly).— Heaven be praised! This time that Armenian did deceive me!*

*Filippo (drawing GIULIO away with him — saluting with his cap).— Felicissima notte — master Robusti!*

# NEW LETTERS OF HENRIK IBSEN\*†

*Translated by Arne Kildal and Louis J. Bailey*

## I

TO CLEMENS PETERSEN

CHRISTIANIA, August 10, 1863.

MR. CLEMENS PETERSEN:

I can never get on with letter writing, mostly because I apprehend that on my authorship in this respect may be used with good reason that same characterization which you—as it seems to me rather roughly—apply to my prose in general; nevertheless I must write you a few lines to thank you, sincerely and cordially, for your review of my book. I thank you for that in which I agree with you (which is not exclusively those parts of the criticism complimentary to me) and for that about which, when I am sometime fortunate enough to meet you personally, I shall at least try to argue with you. I particularly thank you because I see that you have not so much against me after all, as until now I had instinctively imagined; this has to me an importance that may not be easy to explain to you, who do not know to what a terrible degree I feel intellectually alone up here. My ‘friends’ view of me does not, however, do me any harm; I see, with regard to myself, in all points clearer than all my friends—and this certainly not to my advantage. I am now working on a historical play in five acts, but in prose, I *cannot* write it in verse. You do me some little injustice when you hint that I have tried to resemble Björnson; ‘Lady Inger of Östraat’ and ‘The Warriors at Helgeland’ were written before Björnson had yet written a line. (N. B. it is possible that ‘Between the Battles’ existed at the time when I wrote ‘The Warriors’ but it did not and could not come under my eye.) As to ‘Love’s Comedy’ I can assure you that if it were ever necessary for an author to rid himself of a sentiment and a subject it was so with me when I began that work. I shall follow your kind advice to send ‘Lady Inger’ to the Royal Theatre; I only wish that I might handle the matter in the right way and that it might succeed.

\* Appeared for the first time in the Norwegian magazine, *Samtiden*, February, 1908.

† Copyright, 1908, by Arne Kildal.



I have felt a strong desire to send you these few grateful lines, for I have a deep, personal feeling that you have done me a good service by not putting my book aside in silence.

Your obliging,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Clemens Petersen was a leading literary critic of the day. From 1857 to 1868 he contributed to *Faedrelandet*. He had considerable influence and his views were a strong determining factor in public opinion. He reviewed rather favorably some of Ibsen's earlier works, among them 'Love's Comedy,' referred to in the letter, which was reviewed at some length in *Faedrelandet*, July 18, 1863. The prose drama mentioned, on which Ibsen was working, is 'The Pretenders.'

## II

ROME, December 4, 1865.

MR. CLEMENS PETERSEN:

Next Christmas there will appear a dramatic poem by me in which I most urgently ask you to interest yourself as far as your conscience in any way will permit. The misery and hopelessness at home have driven me to look into myself and into the condition of things; out of this the sentiment and the contents of the poem have developed. You once wrote of me that the versified form with the symbolic behind it was my most natural mode of expression. I have often thought about it. I think the same myself and in concurrence therewith the poem has shaped itself. But I have not been able to avoid striking with hard hands. I ask you, if you can, not to bring this side forward under any magnifying glass. Your review will be a determining factor in my countrymen's reception of the poem and of those truths which I have not been able to withhold; but of course I should like as long as possible to avoid any martyrdom.

The journalistic scribblers that are criticising in Norway do not understand it. I therefore urgently ask that as soon and as strongly as possible you will support me in all those points where you find that the matter or I myself deserve it. Should you have anything to communicate to me that does not find place in your public review — which I await with assurance and eagerness — I would thank you most heartily for a few lines; I have an insufferably oppressive feeling of standing alone.

Yours truly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

The dramatic poem referred to is *Brand*, which did not appear, however, until the spring of 1866.

## III

ROME, March 9, 1867.

MR. CAND. MAG. CLEMENS PETERSEN:

Although I have limited myself to a third person — for nearly a year now — in expressing to you my thankfulness for your review of ‘Brand’ and the advantages thereby secured to me it is truly not from a lack of gratefulness, but you once took occasion to write a word about undue intimacy after short and hasty acquaintance, and that word has made me somewhat shy. I feel very sure, however, that there has been no such ‘affectation’ in my appeals to you; yet the characteristic, which you have thus noticed, is at least so truly Norwegian that I can easily see it was a Norwegian who gave you opportunity for the observation and the remark. In spite of this I still dare to send you my thanks for the review — both for the written criticism and for the one which lies in what is not expressed. The first has been a great personal joy to me and somewhat to my advantage with the public; the latter has surely not been any joy to me, but just on that account it has to an equally greater degree served for a self-measurement — a matter which if left neglected, is not unpunished.

But I have more to thank you for than the review of ‘Brand’ and my other works. I want to thank you for every word you have written besides, and I hope that in my new work you will acknowledge that I have taken an essential step forward.

I have been told that you once said that you did not believe it would be of any use to review my works, as I would probably not follow suggestions for improvement. I would certainly not follow directions upon the strength of mere authority, for thus I would become untrue in my own sight, and such a blind following of your suggestions I am quite sure would be of no joy to you. But this step forward that I have mentioned consists in just this fact, that hereafter there can be no question of ‘want to be,’ but of ‘must be’; and across that yawning gulf you have helped me, and therefore it is that I now thank you and always shall thank you.

Hoping that in these lines you will not see anything more or less than our certainly remote acquaintance grants me the privilege of writing, I am,

Your ever thankful,

HENRIK IBSEN.

The ‘new work’ referred to is ‘Peer Gynt.’ (See Ibsen’s letters, p. 144 *seq.*)

## IV

TO P. F. SIEBOLD

DRESDEN, February 10, 1869.

MR. P. F. SIEBOLD:

I must urgently ask you to forgive me for waiting until now to answer your kind note of the sixth of last month. A new literary work, which at present demands all my time and all my thought, must bear the blame for this long delay.

I am extremely grateful to you that you have chosen 'Brand' to be translated into the German. The undertaking is certainly very difficult; but in your beautiful language it is possible to do miracles.

Do you not think it would be of interest to add to the German edition a preface containing a short account of the reception the book has had in the three Scandinavian countries? In the course of three years five large editions have appeared. Councillor Hegel will be glad to give you any other needed information.

If you had not already chosen the publisher, I should have advised you to apply to the proprietor of the Scandinavian bookstore in Leipzig, Mr. Helms, who has already published many translations from the Danish and Norwegian, and who, besides, is highly esteemed here.

We shall hardly meet at Christiania next summer. I do not intend to return so soon to the home where I find it too cold — in every sense of that word. I do not give up the hope, however, of sometime having the pleasure of personally making your acquaintance. Please give my regards to our mutual Scandinavian friends; and wishing and hoping that you soon and successfully overcome all the difficulties connected with the editing, I am,

Yours respectfully and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

P. F. Siebold was a commercial traveler who had become acquainted with Northern literature on his travels in the North. Frederik Hegel had, since 1850, been the head of the well-known Gyldendalske publishing firm in Copenhagen. From 1861 he had been the publisher of Björnson's works, and of Ibsen's from 1865.

## V

DRESDEN, May 9, 1869.

HONORABLE MR. P. F. SIEBOLD:

I have much for which to ask your pardon. First, I must ask you to pardon the state in which I return your manuscript; in destroying some of



my useless rough drafts I unfortunately happened to tear your preface in two and only discovered afterward what had happened. My delay in answering your greatly esteemed notes is due to the fact that I have been waiting for answers to certain inquiries I have had made in Leipzig. According to information that I have now received, Dr. Helms is no longer connected with the Scandinavian bookstore there. Literary friends have advised me to handle the matter in the following way: you are connected with the Leipz: *Illust: Zeitung*; if it were possible for you to get in a biography of me there, then I could furnish the necessary portrait. Councillor Hegel would furnish you with the needed material. Such a biography ought only to contain favorable matter; the German critics will surely find enough that is objectionable later. I should particularly like if you could find it convenient to mention what I had to struggle against in the earlier days; you might also emphasize the fact that the cabinet and Storting, acknowledging the position I hold in Norwegian literature, several years ago unanimously granted me a salary for life, besides providing ample traveling stipends, etc. My dear Mr. Siebold, you must not understand me as wishing this in any way to partake of humbug; that is against my nature; but people assure me those things are necessary. If my name were in that way introduced into Germany it would be far easier to get your translation published. If you would later send it to me I would take it to Leipzig, have the translation reviewed in some of the periodicals, talk with those concerned, and not yield until the book is published. The preface might then, referring to the biography, be made considerably shorter. If you favor this plan write to me. Henceforth I shall have time at my disposal and will do everything possible to advance an enterprise which is so much to my own interest. I have a belief that 'The Pretenders' might also be suitable for translation, and could be performed in German theaters; the content of the play is remarkably well suited to later German conditions; the unification of parts of the country under one head, etc.; and were I first known there, I have no doubt but that I could induce Leipzig's present theater manager, Heinrich Laube, to make a beginning. These last plans, however, are for the future. At present I await your answer regarding the biography, and ask you to hold me in the same kind memory in which I shall always hold you.

Yours respectfully and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Based on information furnished by Professor Lorentz Dietrichson, Mr. Siebold contributed a biography of Ibsen to *Illustrierte Zeitung* for March 19, 1870; his translation of 'Brand' did not appear until February, 1872.

## VI

DRESDEN, March 6, 1872.

MY DEAR MR. SIEBOLD:

It was a double pleasure to receive your kind letter after so long a silence. I am quite sure I wrote you after the biography appeared in *Illustr: Zeitung*; immediately afterward the war broke out, I went to Copenhagen, and all interest was entirely taken up by the magnificent world events. I assure you I often thought of you during that turbulent time; for I did not know whether or not you were an officer in the militia, and I imagined all kinds of possibilities. Fortunately they were only imaginings, and I thank you that you now seriously set about your intention of introducing 'Brand' to the German reading world.

I have not received the book yet; I am very desirous to see it, but do not doubt at all that the translation will satisfy me. It is high time, though, that your work should appear, for here in Dresden there is another translation ready that should even now be at the printer's. This translation is by the novelist Julie Ruhkopf, who has sent me the manuscript for approval. I consider it a matter of course that she — under the present circumstances — should not publish it. In a Berlin bookseller's periodical is announced a translation of 'The Pretenders' and 'The League of Youth' at the same time that this latter play is being prepared for the theater in Vienna. I do not know that you have heard of my having been involved this winter in a controversy with the magazine *Im neuen Reich*, which appears in Leipzig under the direction of Dr. A. Dowe and Gustav Freitag. It was occasioned by some utterances in my poems with regard to Prussian politics. The controversy is conducted in a very chivalrous manner, however; the explanation which I have given of my standpoint has been considered satisfactory, and the matter, which was at first very disagreeable to me, will only — as my literary friends here assure me — advertise the translation of my work.

You are mistaken when you think that I do not recognize the greatness of a man like Bismarck; but I see in him an essential obstacle to a good and friendly relation between Germany and Scandinavia. The present estrangement is unnatural between two people so nearly related; there must and ought to be a closer approachment; the interest of both parties demands that. On the whole, during my long stay in Germany I have changed my views in many respects, but that subject is too long to take up in a letter; I shall have to save it until I again have the pleasure of meeting you personally. And so for this time, a hearty farewell from

Yours truly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

## VII

## TO BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

(*On a calling card, with The Pillars of Society*)

TO BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON:

Your words on the occasion of Georg Brandes' departure have given me joy and deeply affected me. In them you are entirely yourself. Would you be favorably disposed to receive the enclosed book from me and give it to your wife? H. I.

MUNICH, October 28, 1877.

Georg Brandes moved, in 1877, to Berlin. This approachment on the side of Ibsen took place after several years' estrangement between the two poets. (For the cause of the estrangement see Ibsen's letters, p. 21 *seq.*)

In 1844 the so-called 'union flag' was introduced, having a union sign in the upper corner nearest the mast. This sign consisted of the colors of both Sweden and Norway, — red, white, blue, and yellow, and was to be displayed in the commercial, post, and customhouse flags. In 1879 a proposal was made that the union sign should be taken out of the commercial flag, and after this proposal had been carried three times in the Storting, it finally, 1898, became law without the royal assent. By the dissolution of the union in 1905 the union sign was removed from all flags.

## VIII

AMALFI, July 12, 1879.

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON:

It was a great pleasure to receive a letter from you; but it would have been a still greater pleasure if the letter had treated of a matter in which I could feel that I might join you. To the proposal in regard to the flag in its most vital essence I must object and I will briefly show why.

In the first place I think that the protest against the union sign should have been made at the time it was proposed to put the sign there. Now the sign has grown to be a fact and such it must remain. For you cannot eradicate the consciousness of union from our minds, what satisfaction can it be, then, to take the sign from the flag? That it should be a sign of dependency I cannot at all understand. The Swedish flag bears the same mark. That shows that we are not more dependent on the Swedes than they are on us. Besides, I do not have any great liking for symbols. Symbols are not



seasonable any longer, except in Norway. Up there the people are so very busy with symbols and theories and ideas that practical progress can make no advance. And there is something enervating in this to occupy the mind with fruitless problems.

But the main reason why I am not satisfied that such a proposal was made is that I think it is a sin against our people to make burning questions of those that are not so. More than *one* burning question at a time can never seriously come to the front among a people; if there are more, then they naturally detract in interest. Now we have with us a single question which ought to be a burning one, but which — I am sorry to say — does not seem to be so. We have with us not more than a single matter for which I think it worth while to fight; and that is the introduction of an up to date popular education. This matter includes all other matters; and if it is not carried through, then we may easily let all the others rest. It is quite unessential for our politicians to give society more liberties so long as they do not provide individuals with liberty. It is said that Norway is a free and independent state, but I do not value much this liberty and independence so long as I know that the individuals are neither free nor independent. And they are surely not so with us. There do not exist in the whole country of Norway twenty-five free and independent personalities. It is impossible for such ones to exist. I have tried to acquaint myself with our educational matters — with school courses, with schedules, with educational topics, etc. It is revolting to see how the educational hours, particularly in the lower grades of the public school, are taken up with the old Jewish mythology and legendary history and with the mediæval distortion of a moral teaching, which undoubtedly in its original form was the purest that has ever been preached. Here is the field where we, one and all, should claim that a 'pure flag' be displayed. Let the union sign remain, but take the monkhood sign out of the mind; take out the sign of prejudice, narrowmindedness, wrong-seeing, dependence, and the belief in groundless authority, — so that individuals may come to sail under their own flag. But this is a practical matter and it is hard for such matters to attract interest to themselves with us in Norway. Our whole educational system has not yet enabled us to reach that far. For this reason also our politics still appear as if we were in a constituent assembly. We are still engaged in discussing principles. Other countries are long ago out of the woods as to principles, and the struggle concerns the practical use of them. When with us a new task turns up it is not faced with assurance and presence of mind, but with bewilderment. It is our popular education which has brought us to a point where the Norwegian people are thus confused. It appeared clearly in the flag matter, and that

on both sides. The seamen, undoubtedly, had the clearest view, after all; and that is natural, for their occupation carries with it a freer development of the personality. But when mountain peasants from over in the remote valleys express, in addresses, their need of ridding the flag of the union sign, then it cannot possibly be anything but the merest humbug; for where there is no need of setting free one's own personality there can much less be any need of setting free such an abstract thing as a society symbol.

I must limit myself to these few suggestions of my view in this matter. I am entirely unable to agree therein; nor can I agree with you, when you say in your letter that we poets are preferably called to forward this affair. I do not think it is our task to take charge of the state's liberty and independence, but, certainly to awaken into liberty and independence the individual, and as many as possible. Politics is not, so far as I can see, the most important business of our people; and perhaps it already holds a wider place with us than is to be wished in view of the necessity for personal emancipation. Norway is both sufficiently free and independent, but much is lacking to enable us to say the same with regard to the Norwegian man and the Norwegian woman.

With our best regards to you and yours,

HENRIK IBSEN.

## IX

ROME, March 8, 1882.

DEAR BJÖRNSON:

I have been thinking for a long time that I should write to you and ask you to accept my grateful thanks because you so frankly and honestly stood up to my defense at a time when I was attacked on so many sides. It was really no more than I might have expected of your great courageous chieftain mind. But after all, there was no compelling reason for you to step forward and express yourself as you did, and because you did not hesitate, nevertheless, to throw yourself into the struggle, for that you must be assured I shall never forget you.

I have also noticed that during your stay in America you have written of me in kind and complimentary terms. For this also I thank you, and let me at the same time tell you that you were hardly out of my thoughts all the time you were away. I was unusually nervous just at that time and an American trip has always seemed to me to be an uncomfortably daring deed. Then, too, I heard that you were ill over there, and I read about storms on the ocean just when you were expected to return. It then became so

vividly impressed on my mind how exceedingly much you are to me — as to all the rest of us. I felt should anything happen to you, should such a great calamity befall our countries, then all the joy of production would depart from me.

Next summer it will be twenty-five years since *Synnöve* appeared. I traveled up through Valdres and read it on the way. I hope this memorable year will be celebrated as it deserves to be. If circumstances arrange themselves as I wish, I too would like to go home to the celebration.

One matter I must mention to you. Through *Dagbladet*, or in some other way, you have probably become acquainted with the contents of the letter which I wrote Auditor Berner about a year ago. I had then no opportunity to confer with you; but I do not think I could well imagine that you would have any essential objection to either the contents of the letter or the application itself. To me it seems a burning injustice that we should so long remain without any legal protection for our literary property. I have now written to Berner again and given him a survey of what I think I, for one, have lost. This amounts, considering only the two royal theatres of Stockholm and Copenhagen, to about twenty-five thousand kroner. 'A Doll's House,' which was paid according to the regulation, yielded me in Copenhagen nine thousand kroner. Each one of your plays that were performed there would surely have yielded you at least as much had we had the convention. Count over what this all amounts to. And then Germany!

To be able to work with full and undivided power in the service of the mental emancipation one must be placed in a position somewhat economically independent. The stagnation party plainly counteracts the spread of our books and there are theaters which refuse to perform our plays. It will be best for the people themselves if in our future production we are not compelled to pay any regard to this.

I therefore hope that you will not disapprove of the step I have taken. I have simply asked for justice, nothing further.

Give your wife our best regards, and you yourself accept repeated thanks from

Yours truly and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

The opening paragraph refers to Björnson's defence of 'Ghosts.' Björnson lectured in America from the autumn of 1880 until May, 1881. Hagbard Berner was from 1880 to 1888 one of the most influential members of the 'Left' (Liberal and Radical) party in the Storting. Ibsen's appeal to him concerned an increased government pension as a compensation for



lack of protection to authors. In compliance with this appeal Mr. Berner brought forward and on various occasions supported a proposal to increase Ibsen's and Björnson's pensions by the sum of twenty-four hundred kroner per annum in consideration of their services to their country and of the small remuneration which they received from their works owing to the existing state of the copyright laws. Some of the members of the 'Right' party disputed the statement that Ibsen's writings had been of benefit to his country, and maintained — what was really the case — that the losses of both authors were not due to the lack of copyright laws in Norway, but to the lack of them in Denmark, in which country their books were printed and published. *Dagbladet* is a Norwegian radical newspaper.

## X

ROME, January 9, 1884.

DEAR BJÖRNSEN:

Thank you for the New Year's letter. And pardon me for waiting until to-day to send you an answer. You must not think that in the mean time I have been in doubt regarding the matter. To me there was nothing to consider; immediately after I had read your letter I had the answer ready, and here it is:

I neither can nor will take any leading position at the Christiania Theater. My theatrical experiences and the recollections of home are not of such a nature that I should feel any practical inclination to revive them. I might certainly feel a responsibility and a duty in the matter if I thought that as director I could do anything to the advantage of our dramatic art; but of this I despair greatly. Our theater staff is demoralized, will not submit to discipline and give absolute obedience; and, moreover, we have a press which is ever ready to support the refractory ones against the leader. This is the chief reason with us why we cannot, as in other countries where the anarchistic tendencies are less developed, obtain any real ensemble. I do not think I could succeed in changing these conditions to something better; for they are too closely connected with our whole national view of life; and moreover, my inclination for the practical business of the theater is too small. Therefore I would not under any circumstances undertake this matter.

But, dear Björnson, the main point, however, is *this*, that it is not me at all whom the committee wants. For it is you and no one else. Whether the hesitation which you feel in accepting the offer is quite unconquerable I naturally cannot judge; but I would feel a hearty joy for the sake of the whole matter if it were not. I shall of course assume under all circumstances that you will reject the offer only after the closest consideration.

But whatever you make up your mind to do yourself, the person concerned ought to provide that your son be attached to the theater — if he is willing. Last fall I exchanged a couple of letters with him concerning other affairs and I still further gained confirmation of my conviction that in him we would be able to get just *that* technical theatrical officer whom we most of all need. Schröder might then, in case of need, remain,— that is provided you cannot by any means accept the committee's offer.

Besides, I must say that I am not quite sure whether the Christiania public at present really feels the need of a good theatre. The concourse which the operettas and equestrian performances at Tivoli almost always can enjoy and the interest which is shown in the students' and shopmen's amateur performances seems to me to suggest a point of culture which not yet quite masters the true dramatic art. For that reason I regret that the opera at the Christiania Theater was abandoned. The opera claims from its public less culture than the drama. Therefore, it flourishes in the large garrison cities, in the mercantile cities and wherever a numerous aristocracy is gathered. But from an opera public may be gradually developed a dramatic public. And for the theater's staff, also, the opera has a disciplinary power; under the baton the individual has to place himself in perfect submission.

The other points in your letter I shall return to at another time. Cordial thanks for the photographs. Best regards to your wife from us. Also regards to Lies. I wait with great anxiety to learn your final decision in the theater matter. Thanks, thanks and joy of 'A Gauntlet' and 'Pastor Sang.' Now stage them yourself. Farewell for this time.

Yours truly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Björnson did not accept the offer, but his son, Björn Björnson, was engaged in September, 1884, as a stage manager at the Christiania Theater. Schröder remained as chief from 1879 to 1899. In 1899 the new building of the National Theater was opened and Björn Björnson was its chief from that date to 1907. The present chief is the author Vilhelm Krag.

## XI

### TO JULIUS HOFFORY

MUNICH, February 4, 1887.

DEAR PROFESSOR:

Since my return from Berlin I have almost every day thought of writing

to you. But there has always been some hindrance until now you have forestalled me with your kind letter, for which I ask you to accept my most cordial thanks.

I wrote to Mrs. von Borch yesterday and informed her that, except for a few more definitely stated conditions regarding the proofreading, I have no objection to her translation of 'The Wild Duck' being published by Mr. Fischer, instead of by Reclam.

As regards 'Lady Inger,' on the other hand, that is an old play which appeared about ten years ago in a German translation by Emma Klingensfeld from the publishing house of Theodor Ackermann here in Munich. The edition is not yet exhausted so that under the circumstances a new translation of the drama should hardly be considered at present.

It was also an extremely great pleasure for me to learn, through *you*, that the German edition of Rosmersholm has had such a favorable reception in Berlin.

I look forward to your note on 'Ghosts' with great expectation and send you in advance my thanks for it.

My visit in Berlin and all connected with it I regard as a great and true personal happiness. It has had a wonderfully refreshing and renewing effect on my mind, and will quite certainly leave its traces in my future production.

I ask you, my dear professor, to accept my most cordial thanks for the large and important share which you had in all this, and to extend similar thanks to Dr. Brahm and Dr. Schlenther, and also to as many as possible of all the kind people with whom I had the good fortune to come in contact.

Your appointment as professor I have read in the Danish papers and I extend to you, on this occasion, my heartiest congratulations. Henceforth you will be associated with another political community. But I suppose that in many respects your scientific work will involve a continued connection with the Northern countries.

And now I say farewell for this time, and am

Yours indebtedly and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Julius Höffory was a Danish scholar and, from 1887, professor of Northern philology at the university of Berlin. When Ibsen wrote this letter he had just returned from Berlin, where he had been present at the first performance of 'Ghosts' January 9th; two days later he was signally honored by a great banquet.



## XII

MUNICH, February 26, 1888.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR:

I thank you most heartily for your two letters which I now answer.

Brausewetter's translation I have feared for a long time, as I heard a rumor that such a one was in preparation; but I hoped to the very last that the time for its appearance could not be so near. Both he and Mr. Reclam have kept entirely silent to me.

A double pleasure it is to me under the circumstances to learn that the Berlin edition will be hastened as much as possible. I also feel greatly obliged to Mr. Fischer for this and hope that his competitor will not cause him a very great loss, if he can immediately announce his own legally authorized edition as soon forthcoming.

Of my latest photograph, which I regard as the best one, but which is no longer on sale, I have now the promise of a few copies for to-morrow and I shall then take pleasure in sending you one without delay.

I ask you to use my letters in any way that you may find most serviceable for the matter in hand, and above all I am heartily thankful for the helpful introduction which your hinted promise has given me the pleasure to anticipate.

'Emperor and Galilean' is not the first work I have written in Germany, but probably the first I have written under the influence of German intellectual life. In the fall of 1868 when I arrived from Italy and took up my residence in Dresden I brought with me the plot of 'The League of Youth' and wrote that play the following winter. During my four years' stay in Rome I had made historical studies and several notes for 'Emperor and Galilean,' but had not devised any clear plan for its execution and hence still less written any of the play. My view of life at that time was still the national Scandinavian, and so I could not feel at home with the foreign subject. Then I experienced the great time in Germany,—the war year and the development afterward. To me all this involved at many points a transforming power. My view of the history of the world and of human life had been until then a national view. Now it broadened to a racial view, and I could write 'Emperor and Galilean.' It was finished in the spring of 1873.

What you tell me of that sentiment still so favorable to me in Berlin pleases me greatly and not the less so that perhaps I may now have an opportunity of getting one or more of my plays performed at the Schauspielhaus. My next work, when such a one is ready, will be offered there with great pleasure.

Cordial thanks for all your sacrificing friendship, and the same to all the others who so faithfully and indefatigably care for my affairs. How far would I have reached, I wonder, if I had been under the necessity of depending upon myself? Be sure that I in thankfulness deeply acknowledge this.

Brausewetter's translation referred to is of 'The Wild Duck' which was published by Reclam in 1887.

### XIII

MUNICH, February 14, 1889.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR:

Your kind letter which I received yesterday I now hasten to answer. So Mr. Anno desires that on the programs and in the performance the name 'Bolette,' which cannot well be used in Germany, be replaced by 'Babette' or some other girl name. As my play does not take place in Germany the reason advanced by him for the change can hardly be his only or chief one. I suppose that he has still another one and I therefore accede to his wish with pleasure. Babette may therefore be put in its place,—provided of course, that Arnholm's saying that the name is not pretty will not seem inexplicable to German auditors. As to this I can have no sure opinion, but trust wholly to you in this matter also.

I must, however, decidedly object that there should be placed on the program 'Ein Seemann' or 'Ein fremder Seemann' or 'Ein Steuermann.' For he is not any of these. When Ellida met him ten years ago he was second mate. Seven years later he hired himself as common boatswain, consequently as something considerably less. And now he appears as passenger on a tourist steamer. To the crew of the ship he does not belong. He is dressed as a tourist. Nobody should know what he is, just as little should anybody know who he is or what he is really called. This uncertainty is just the chief point in the method chosen by me for the occasion. I kindly ask Mr. Anno to have attention directed to this during the rehearsals, otherwise the true vein of the presentation might easily be missed. But if the expression 'Ein fremder Mann' possesses a comical flavor for the Berlinians — could not the program have merely 'Ein Fremder?' I have nothing to object to that. But should not even this improve the matter then I do not think there is anything to do but to let the eventual gayeties have their free course. It is to be hoped they do not make any more serious or lasting harm.

It is a great comfort for me to know that you, my dear professor, will have an eye upon the rehearsals, at least the last ones. For there may be

so many things in the foreign conditions, with which manager Anno is not quite familiar. And then I hope for a good result.

According to a telegram from Christiania 'The Lady from the Sea' was performed there for the first time the day before yesterday and with quite extraordinary applause. From Weimar, where the play was to be given about this time, I have not yet heard anything. With best regards, I am,

Yours truly and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Mr. Anno is a German manager who put on the stage 'The Lady from the Sea' in Berlin for the first time March 4, 1889, Ibsen being present.

#### XIV

MUNICH, March 26, 1889.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR:

Every day since my return have I thought of you and the other friends in Berlin and intended to send you a few words. But during my absence there had accumulated such a stack of business letters that I have not yet quite mastered them all.

Still to-day I write a few preliminary words to ask that you accept and — when you have an opportunity — forward my most cordial thanks to our many mutual acquaintances who contributed toward making the week in Berlin the brightest time in my life. When I look back upon it, all seems to me like a dream. It makes me almost uneasy.

The following week I spent in Weimar. There also 'The Lady from the Sea' was quite excellently played. The interpretation and representation of the characters had a strange resemblance to that at the Schauspielhaus.

Here Wangel, however, was not quite so finely finished in details. Nor was Lyngstrand so incomparably and truly conceived and individualized. But 'the strange man' I cannot wish or hardly imagine better done than here — a tall, slender figure with the face of a hawk, piercing black eyes and an admirable deep subdued voice.

I have gone through my whole collection of books without finding any copy of the second edition of 'Love's Comedy' in which the preface appears, — for in the later editions it is left out. I have therefore some days since written to Chief Clerk Larsen requesting him to secure a copy and send it to you. I hope he will succeed.

From Vienna I have received various letters, from which I can see that Dr. Schlenther's lecture has had a strong effect there. And the strangest



part is that these communications and declarations do not arise from German, but from Magyar and Polish circles, the whole fundamental view of which, on life as well as on literature and its advancing aims, would be thought to be so exceedingly divergent from our Germanic view. I suppose the explanation lies in the universality of the Germanic nature and the Germanic mind, which predestines it to a future empire of the world.

That I have been allowed to take part in these currents I clearly and deeply feel that I owe to my having entered into the life of German society.

I have to stop for to-day; hope soon to hear from you; send most cordial regards to our mutual circle, and am,

Yours truly and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

P.S.— I wish to express gratefulness particularly for Dr. Brahm's article in *Frankfurter Zeitung* and for Dr. Schlenther's in *Die Nation*.

H. I.

## XV

### TO HELENE RAFF

Late Friday night.  
MUNICH, Sep. 30, 1889.

DEAR CHILD:

How kind, how lovable of you to visit us yesterday. My wife is so truly, heartily fond of you. And I too. As you sat there in the twilight and told us various things so thoughtfully and sensibly, do you know what I then thought, what I wished? No, that you do not know. I wished — Alas, if I only had such a dear and lovely daughter.

Come to see us again real soon. But in the mean time you must keep busy at work artist-like in your atelier. There you must not be disturbed for the present.

Blessings on your dear head,  
Yours truly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Helene Raff is a German artist whose acquaintance Ibsen had just made in Gossensass, and this letter is written in German.

## XVI

CHRISTIANIA, March 30, 1892.

DEAREST MISS RAFF:

Allow me to send you my warmest, my most heartfelt thanks for your

kind letter, which reached me on my birthday, and also for your wonderfully charming picture which I had the unspeakably great pleasure to receive a few days ago. It is now hung in a good place in my study, so that I may constantly have it before my eyes, constantly satisfy myself by the view out over the broad, open sea,— and constantly increase my desire to meet the dear, dear lovely young girl who has created the beautiful little work of art. And who during its execution has thought of me from afar. Oh — if I might only have the opportunity to render thanks personally, thank you in such a way as I should most prefer. The sea I love. Your picture carries me in thought and sentiment to what I love. Yes, — you have surely enriched me for life by what you have given me. Now little Solveig shall be hung beside the sea picture. Then I will have you wholly and altogether before me — and within me.

Such warm recollections of Munich arose in me when I received those remembrances in words and colors from you. How I should like to be down there again now. For I belong there so heartily. But then there are so many things in life which place a restraint upon a man's wishes and desires.

You have acquired a remarkable ability in handling the Norwegian language. Do you never think of making a summer trip up here? To dream a bright fleeting summer night's dream among the mountains or out at sea?

Give me an answer to that sometime, dearest Miss Raff. Will you? It would be unspeakably dear to me again — of course at your convenience — to receive a few lines from you.

Yours truly and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Miss Raff had given Ibsen, in 1890, as a birthday present, a sketch of a young girl's head which he at once named 'Solveig.'

## XVII

### TO OSSIP-LOURIÉ

CHRISTIANIA, February 19, 1899.

MR. OSSIP-LOURIÉ:

I am much obliged to you for your kind offer of the plan to publish some thoughts extracted from my works, and with great pleasure grant the desired approval.

I only ask you to remember that the thoughts expressed in my dramas arise from my dramatic characters, who express them, and are not directly from me either in form or content.

Yours respectfully and obligingly,

HENRIK IBSEN.

Mr. Ossip-Lourié is a French-Russian author whose book, 'La philosophie sociale dans le théâtre d'Ibsen,' appeared in 1900.

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## SONGS FROM PLATO AND PTOLEMAEUS

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK BY M. J. HERTZBERG

TO HER

PLATO

UPON the stars of heaven thou dost pore —  
Would I were heaven to meet thy gaze the more!

A SYMBOL OF ETERNITY

PTOLEMAEUS

I KNOW that I am mortal: I know my life is short,  
But when I see above me the heaven's azure court,  
And gaze on whirling spirals of multitudes of stars,  
No longer earth contains me, no longer distance bars —  
Then Zeus himself I rival: with very gods I mate,  
And seated in the heavens my eager soul I sate.

ON A SHIPWRECKED SAILOR

PLATO

I FLOATED in from the tempestuous sea,  
And now lie buried here;  
A husbandman lies mouldering close to me —  
One death's for all, I fear.



# OSCAR WILDE AS A POET

BY HOMER E. WOODBRIDGE

**T**HOSE who read poetry for what Matthew Arnold has conveniently, if rather pedantically, called 'criticism of life' will find little to their taste in the poems of Oscar Wilde. His criticism of life is very simple, not to say crude: roughly speaking, life represents to him passion and weariness of passion. Around these two themes by far the greater part of his music is written: In both a number of variations are possible. Wilde's two great passions are love of liberty, in the romantic sense of freedom from all restraint, and love of beauty. His weariness of passion expresses itself variously in the mere disgust which follows over-indulgence, in envy of the old Greek poise and symmetry, in admiration of the serenity of men like Wordsworth, and even in cravings for the consolations of religion. All these are different forms of reaction against excess of passion. I shall quote two stanzas, the first typical of Wilde's poetry of passion, the second of his poetry of reaction.

' Then turned he round his weary eyes and saw  
And ever nigher still their faces came,  
And nigher ever did their young mouths draw  
Until they seemed one perfect rose of flame,  
And longing arms around her neck he cast  
And felt her throbbing bosom, and his breath came hot and  
fast.'

' O, we are wearied of this sense of guilt,  
Wearied of pleasure's paramour despair,  
Wearied of every temple we have built,  
Wearied of every right, unanswered prayer,  
For man is weak; God sleeps; and heaven is high;  
One fiery-colored moment; one great love; and lo! we die.'

Passion — weariness: passion — weariness: so the pendulum of his existence swung. But passion in itself is by no means an ignoble thing; if it be not, as Balzac declared, all humanity, it is at least the great motive power



of humanity. Oscar Wilde's tragedy lies in this: that he was a worshipper of passion yet never felt its noblest aspiration,— the aspiration toward the ideal. He was Celtic by descent, and his poetry has many of the qualities which Renan and Arnold have taught us to call Celtic; but he lacked the finest 'Celtic' quality, the spiritual passion for the unattainable; he never felt and never understood 'the desire of the moth for the star.' This terrible limitation ruined Oscar Wilde as a man, and what is of more importance to the world, it prevented him from attaining greatness as a poet. Other limitations he had: lack of restraint, for instance, and lack of perfect finish: but poets have been great in spite of these. The one insurmountable barrier between him and great poetic accomplishment was his lack of spiritual vision.

There are many who read poetry chiefly for its sensuous qualities; these will always delight in Oscar Wilde. No man ever loved beauty more passionately than he, and few have been more sensitive to its various material forms. Beyond any English poet of his generation, he possessed the power of vivid and accurate word-painting; and certainly beyond most of them, the command of that indefinable word-magic which is the rarest and most wonderful quality of poetry. These things do not redeem Wilde's work from materialism; but they beautify his materialism, make it memorable, and perhaps will make it immortal.

For convenience, his poems may be roughly divided into three classes: short lyrics, sonnets, and long narrative and descriptive poems in a stanza of his own invention. There remain unclassified three important poems which I believe are to be regarded as his masterpieces: 'The New Helen,' 'The Sphinx,' and 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol.' I shall discuss the poems in this order.

Wilde's poetic gift is not primarily lyrical. His imagination is visual rather than auditory; he is a word-painter rather than a word musician. He belongs not with Edgar Allan Poe and Paul Verlaine and Ernest Dowson, but with Théophile Gautier and the Parnassian School. Nevertheless a few of his lyrics have the genuine singing quality. For the matching of daintiness of movement to daintiness of sentiment, it would be hard to surpass the following dedication, addressed to the poet's wife:

' I can write no stately poem  
As a prelude to my lay;  
From a poet to a poem  
I would dare to say.

‘ For if of these fallen petals  
One to you seem fair,  
Love will waft it till it settles  
On your hair.

‘ And when wind and winter harden  
All the loveless land,  
It will whisper of the garden,  
You will understand.’

A fuller note sounds in ‘ La Bella Donna della mia Mente ’:

‘ My limbs are wasted with a flame,  
My feet are sore with traveling,  
For calling on my lady’s name  
My lips have now forgot to sing.

‘ O linnet, in the wild-rose brake,  
Strain for my love thy melody,  
O lark, sing louder for love’s sake,  
My gentle lady passeth by.’

The ‘ Serenade ’ combines lyric quality with color and picturesqueness:

‘ The western wind is blowing fair  
Across the dark Ægean sea,  
And at the secret marble stair  
My Tyrian galley waits for thee.  
Come down! The purple sail is spread,  
The watchman sleeps within the town,  
Oh, leave thy lily-flowered bed,  
O lady mine, come down, come down!’

These are beautiful lyrics, but they do not show Wilde at his best. Neither is he fully at home with the sonnet, although he handles it with considerable skill. More than any of his other poems, his sonnets are imitative; this is true especially of the earlier ones, most of which are modeled after Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats. The later sonnets are more original and contain many beautiful lines, but are not finely finished. Take, for example, the sonnet ‘ Fabien dei Franchei,’ addressed to Henry Irving; it is passionate and powerful but far from perfect in form:



'The silent room, the heavy creeping shade,  
 The dead that travel fast, the opening door,  
 The murdered brother rising through the floor,  
 The ghost's white fingers on thy shoulders laid  
 And then the lonely duel in the glade,  
 The broken swords, the stifled scream, the gore,  
 Thy grand, revengeful eyes when all is o'er,—  
 These things are well enough,—but thou wert made  
 For more august creation! Frenzied Lear  
 Should at thy bidding wander on the heath  
 With the shrill fool to mock him, Romeo  
 For thee should lure his love, and desperate fear  
 Pluck Richard's recreant dagger from its sheath —  
 Thou trumpet set for Shakespere's lips to blow!

Perhaps the most nearly perfect of the sonnets is 'The Grave of Shelley':

'Like burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed  
 Gaunt cypress trees stand round the sun-bleached stone:  
 Here doth the little night-owl make her throne,  
 And the slight lizard shows his jeweled head,  
 And where the chaliced poppies flame to red,  
 In the still chamber of yon pyramid  
 Surely some old-world sphinx lurks darkly hid  
 Grim warder of this pleasaunce of the dead.

'Oh! sweet indeed to rest within the womb  
 Of Earth, great mother of eternal sleep,  
 But sweeter far for thee a restless tomb  
 In the blue cavern of an echoing deep,  
 Or where the tall ships founder in the gloom  
 Against the rocks of some wave-shattered steep.'

The last two lines are singularly imaginative, and seem to me a good illustration of the 'natural magic of words.'

The five long narrative and descriptive poems, 'The Garden of Eros,' 'The Burden of Itys,' 'Charmides,' 'Panthea,' and 'Humanitad,' comprise nearly a third of Wilde's poetic work. They are all written in a six-line stanza,—a quatrain of ten syllable lines, with alternate rhymes, followed by

a rhymed couplet, of which the first line has ten syllables and the second fourteen. It thus differs from the six-line ballet stave only in that the last line has four extra syllables. This long concluding line is very cumbersome, and Wilde is generally unsuccessful in handling it. Occasionally it is effective but in nine cases out of ten a shorter line would be stronger. Certainly an ordinary rhymed couplet at the end of the stanza would have saved the poet such absurdities as

. . . . . 'spite of all  
Its new-found creeds so sceptical and so dogmatical'

and

' Shall I, the last Endymion, lose all hope  
Because rude eyes peer at my mistress through a telescope? '

It is only fair to add that these execrable lines occur in 'The Garden of Eros,' the first poem written in the six-line stanza. In general 'The Garden of Eros' is unsatisfactory; it is mostly romantic gush of the ordinary sort, and it has no pretension to any kind of form or finish. It is only partly redeemed by a few fine lines, and two or three good stanzas; for example,

' Here not Cephissus, not Ilissus flows,  
The woods of white Colonus are not here,  
On our bleak hills the olive never blows,  
No simple priest conducts his lowing steer  
Up the steep marble way, nor through the town  
Do laughing maidens bear to thee the crocus-flowered gown.'

Keats is suggested here, as he frequently is in Wilde's earlier poems.

'The Burden of Itys' also lacks restraint and finish; but it contains much splendid rhetoric and some genuine poetry, including several pretty echoes of Keats and Theocritus. It shows a considerable advance in the handling of the long final line of the stanza.

' Dreams of the fields of Enna by the far Sicilian sea,'

for instance, is a good fourteen-syllable line, and so is

' And the dim lengthening shadows flit like swallows up the hill.'

'Charmides' is the most successful of the five poems, chiefly because the poet has a definite story to tell, and hence is less inclined to wander off into the misty cloudland of his own sensations. The subject of the poem,—the rape of Athena, by a young Greek fisherman—is abhorrent to anyone

but a decadent romanticist; but if we grant Wilde his story, we must admit that he has treated it with much poetic power. Take, for instance, the lines describing the sensations of Charmides at the touch of Athena's lips:

'It was as if Numidian javelins  
Pierced through and through his wild and whirling brain,  
And his nerves thrilled like throbbing violins  
In exquisite pulsation.'

A sensation could hardly be described with greater plangency or more vivid reality. The two or three stanzas describing the coming of Athena for vengeance are among the best in the poem. After a night spent in the temple, Charmides has fled by ship with his companions. On the ninth night

'Came a great owl with yellow, sulphurous eyes,  
And lit up the ship, whose timbers creaked  
As though the lading of three argosies  
Were in the hold,— and flapped its wings and shrieked  
And darkness straightway stole across the deep.  
Sheathed was Orion's sword, dread Mars himself fled down  
the steep,  
And the moon hid himself behind a tawny mask  
Of drifting cloud, and from the ocean's marge  
Rose the red plume, the huge and hornèd casque,  
The seven-cubit spear, the brazen targe  
And clad in bright and burnished panoply  
Athena strode across the stretch of sick and shivering sea!  
To the dull sailor's sight her loosened locks  
Seemed like the jagged storm-rack, and her feet  
Only the spume that floats on hidden rocks.'

Charmides leaps into the sea to meet the angry goddess, and his body is borne by a Triton back to the Attic coast. Here a dryad falls in love with him, believing him to be a sea-god asleep.

'Nor knew what sacrilege his lips had done,  
But said, "He will awake, I know him well,  
He will awake at evening when the sun  
Hangs his red shield on Corinth's citadel.  
This sleep is but a cruel treachery  
To make me love him more."'



She woos him in a beautiful speech, too long to quote, but Diana discovers the unfaithfulness of her handmaiden, and slays her with the unerring arrow.

‘ Scarce had she spoken when the shuddering trees  
Shook, and the leaves divided, and the air  
Grew conscious of a God, and the gray seas  
Crawled backward, and a long and dismal blare  
Blew from some tasseled horn, a sleuth-hound bayed  
And like a flame a barked reed flew whizzing down the glade.

The last line is not particularly happy; but the first five contain more than one touch of ‘ natural magic.’ The rest of the poem describes the passionate meeting of the lovers in Hades.

‘ Panthea ’ is the most philosophical of Wilde’s poems. The universe is interpreted by the lover in terms of his own passion; all is God, and all is passion, and passion is God. Hence, through the constant change, passion is immortal.

‘ And thus without life’s constant torturing pain  
In some sweet flower we will feel the sun,  
And from the linnet’s throat will sing again  
And as two gorgeous-mailed snakes will run  
Over our graves, or as two tigers creep  
Through the hot jungle where the yellow-eyed huge lions  
sleep,

‘ Ay! had we never loved at all, who knows  
If yonder daffodil had lured the bee  
Into its gilded womb, or any rose  
Had hung with crimson lamps its little tree.  
Methinks no leaf would ever bud in spring  
But for the lovers’ lips that kiss, the poets’ lips that sing.’

The poem ends upon the keynote:

‘The universe itself shall be our immortality.’

This sort of immortality by dissolution into nature has been a favorite dream of the romanticists from Rousseau down. The last three stanzas of Lamartine’s ‘ Lac ’ make an interesting parallel to the passage quoted from ‘ Panthea ’:

‘ Let it [our love] be in thy calm, let it be in thy storms, fair lake, and in the aspect of thy laughing shores, and in those dark pines, and in those wild rocks which overhang thy waters.

‘ Let it be in the breeze that trembles and passes, in the echoes repeated by the banks, in the argent-fronted star that whitens thy surface with its soft brightness.

‘ Let the moaning wind, the sighing reed, the delicate odors of thy balmy air, let all that is seen, heard, or breathed say, ‘ they have loved! ’

‘ Panthea ’ lacks the delicacy and the finish of the French poem, but is superior in vividness and brilliance. Next to ‘ Charmides,’ it must be counted the best of Wilde’s poems in his favorite stanza.

‘ Humanitad ’ is in substance a series of rather loosely connected poetic reflections on human life. We hear the old complaint of passion-weariness,

‘ My lips have drunk enough,— no more! no more! ’

The poet mourns for the lost serenity and poise of the Greeks, deploras the degeneracy of the age and the passing of its great men, and ends with the declaration,

‘ That which is purely human, that is God-like, that is God,’

which does not seem to follow from anything in the poem, and is at all events an execrable line. The poem is poorly constructed and careless in workmanship; nevertheless, it contains passages of pure poetry. I cannot resist the temptation to quote one fine stanza.

. . . ‘ I love to read  
How Asia sent her myriad hosts to war  
Against a little town, and panoplied  
In gilded mail with jeweled scimeter,  
White-shielded, purple-crested, rode the Mede  
Between the waving poplars and the sea  
Which men call Artemisium, till he saw Thermopylæ.’

In general it may be said of these five poems, that they show a pitiable waste of poetic power. Structurally they are nearly as bad as poems can be; with the exception of ‘ Charmides ’ they have no bones. They are utterly lacking in unity, coherence, emphasis; they fly, or rather flutter, in the face of every structural principle. Their disregard of grammar and rhetoric is appalling. In ‘ Humanitad ’ one sprawling sentence runs through six

stanzas; another through four. Workmanship of this sort is worse than careless; it can be characterized only as sloppy. In sadness it must be added, that sometimes '*materiem superabat opus*'; the thought is even more formless and undisciplined than the expression. Yet in every one of these inexcusably chaotic compositions there are, as we have seen, lines and stanzas of undeniable poetic power and occasionally of astonishing poetic beauty. Perhaps the best comment on them is in Wilde's own sonnet, 'Hélas':

'To drift with every passion till my soul  
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play  
Is it for this that I have given away  
Mine ancient wisdom and austere control?  
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll  
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday  
With idle songs for pipe and virelay  
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.'

Scrawled over with idle songs, which mar the secret and true meaning,—a sorry palimpsest Wilde made of his poetic genius as well as of his life.

There remain three poems, differing greatly among themselves; all three are far superior in form and finish to the poems we have been considering, and all three, I believe, are to be regarded as masterpieces. I refer to 'The New Helen,' 'The Sphinx,' and 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol.' Of these 'The New Helen' is the shortest and least important; yet it exhibits Wilde's mastery of color and the picturesque at the highest pitch. It comes nearer to formal perfection than any of Wilde's longer poems, and contains touches of word magic not unworthy of Keats himself. I shall therefore quote two full stanzas:

'No! thou art Helen, and no other one!  
It was for thee that young Sarpedon died,  
And Memnon's manhood was untimely spent;  
It was for thee gold-crested Hector tried  
With Thetis' child that evil race to run  
In the last year of thy beleaguerment;  
Ay! even now the glory of thy fame  
Burns in those fields of trampled asphodel,  
Where the high lords whom Ilion knew so well  
Clash ghostly shields and call upon thy name.

. . . . .



‘Thou wert not born as common women are,  
 But girt with silver splendor of the foam  
 Didst from the depths of sapphire seas arise!  
 And at thy coming some immortal star  
 Bearded with flame, blazed in the Eastern skies  
 And waked the shepherds on thine island home.  
 Thou shalt not die: no asps of Egypt creep  
 Close at thy heels to taint the delicate air;  
 No sullen-blooming poppies stain thy hair,  
 Those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep.’

We have seen that Wilde's poetic genius was primarily picturesque. By temperament he was an extremist; it is therefore not surprising that his love of the picturesque led him to love of the grotesque. ‘The Sphinx’ is a study in the grotesque, but it is plastic rather than pictorial; it is a work of art in three dimensions. Perhaps it might most accurately be defined as a reverie in grotesque word-sculpture. There is nothing like it in English poetry; it represents a new genre in our literature. Rossetti's ‘Burden of Nineveh’ deals with a similar subject, but it is totally different in treatment. In mood Poe's ‘Raven’ approaches ‘The Sphinx’ most nearly, but the ‘Raven’ is verse-music, not verse-sculpture or verse-painting; its appeal is primarily to the ear, not to the eye. Among the modern decadents, the distinction is important. Of course the greatest poetry shows a fusion of the musical and pictorial elements, and all good poetry must possess both to some degree. But one school of modern poets has chosen to emphasize the plastic and pictorial elements of verse, and another school the musical and subtly suggestive elements. In order to make this distinction perfectly clear, I shall quote stanzas from two French poems which sum up the ideals of the rival schools. First from ‘L'Art’ of Theophile Gautier, the leader of the Parnassian or plastic school:

‘Yes, the work of art comes more beautiful out of a substance rebellious to mould,—verse, marble, onyx, enamel.

‘Strive with the Carrara, with the hard and rare Parian, the guardians of purity of contour.

‘Borrow from Syracuse her bronze, where the proud and charming features are firmly stamped.

‘Painter, avoid the aquarelle, and fix the transient color in the furnace of the enameler.

‘Carve, file, chisel; let your floating dream seal itself in the resisting block.’

The opposite ideal is well expressed in 'L'Art Poétique' of Paul Verlaine:

'Music before everything; therefore choose the impalpable, more vague and more soluble in air, with nothing in it which is heavy or firm.

. . . . .

'For we wish shading [nuance] still; no color, only *nuance*; oh, *nuance* alone marries dream to dream and flute to horn. . . .

'Music still and always: let your verse be the winged thing which one perceives flying from a soul on the way to new heavens and new loves.'

The rough prose translation destroys the beauty of both these extracts, which in the original admirably illustrate the doctrines they teach; but the ideas are partly preserved, and the ideas now concern us. Each poet wishes to emphasize one set of qualities at the expense of another set; Gautier will sacrifice the musical elements of verse to the pictorial and plastic elements; Verlaine regards the pictorial and plastic elements merely as hindrances to music. The issue between the two schools is thus clearly brought out.

I have said that 'The Sphinx' is a reverie in grotesque word-sculpture; 'The Raven' might similarly be defined as a reverie in grotesque word-music. The two poets are working with much the same inspiration, but according to different theories of their art. This appears most clearly in the meters of the two poems. Poe uses short trochaic lines, with lines mostly feminine, and rhythms swift and various; Wilde uses slow iambics, in solid couplets of sixteen-syllable lines, with rhymes entirely masculine, curiously interlocked. Wilde constantly appeals to the senses of sight and touch, seldom to hearing; Poe constantly to hearing, sometimes to sight, but only two or three times at most to touch. Still 'The Sphinx' shows the influence of its predecessor, and probably would not have been written if Wilde had never read Poe. 'The Sphinx' symbolizes Wilde's evil genius,—sensuality,—as 'The Raven' symbolizes Poe's evil genius,—melancholy. It is noticeable that Wilde is more hospitable to the messenger of darkness than Poe: he dallies with her and exults in her for a long time; but at last he recognizes that she is his enemy, and vainly conjures her to depart, cursing her as Poe curses the Raven. In other words, Wilde's poem revolves about the two main themes which I said at the beginning are the master themes of his poetry,—passion and weariness of passion.

'The Sphinx' shows the influence of Poe clearly; but probably it was more directly suggested by certain poems of Baudelaire, who acknowledges both Poe and Gautier as his masters, and has affinities with both the modern

decadent schools. Baudelaire's 'Fleurs du Mal,' contain three poems about cats, from which I shall quote short passages, subjoining parallel quotations from the first section of 'The Sphinx.'

'In my brain there walks as in its own apartment a beautiful cat. . . . I look with wonder upon the fire of its pale eyeballs, clear lanterns, vivid opals, which watch me fixedly.

'Come, my beautiful cat . . . and let me plunge into thy splendid eyes, wrought of metal and agate . . . while my fingers slowly caress thy head and thy elastic back, and my hand delights in stroking thy electric body.

'They [cats] assume in meditation the noble attitudes of great sphinxes stretched out in the midst of deserts, which seem to sleep in an endless dream.'

The poems from which these quotations are drawn are curious manifestations of modern decadence, and seem ridiculous enough to an unsympathetic reader, but before we condemn Baudelaire we should remember that he has done far better work. It would be unfair to Coleridge to judge him by his 'Lines to a Young Ass.' To Wilde these poems did not seem ridiculous: certainly he had them in mind when he wrote the following couplets:

'In a dim corner of my room for longer than my fancy thinks  
A beautiful and silent sphinx has watched me through the shifting gloom.  
Upon the mat she lies and leers and on the tawny throat of her  
Flutters the soft and silky fur, or ripples to her pointed ears.  
Come forth, my lovely, languorous Sphinx! and put your head upon my  
knee  
And let me stroke your throat and see your body spotted like the lynx!  
And let me touch those curving claws of yellow ivory, and grasp  
The tail that like a monstrous asp coils round your heavy velvet paws!'

Clearly the suggestion came from Baudelaire; but in the rest of the poem Wilde has developed and elaborated it with brilliant and luxuriant detail of his own. The verse-form also is original, and is peculiarly adapted to the poem. The long deliberate lines give opportunity for opulent elaboration of imagery, and the strange rhyme before the cesura enhances the grotesque barbaric splendor of the diction. The poem is a monologue, addressed to the Sphinx; the poet meditates her history, questions her of her loves, and finally, becoming oppressed and almost hypnotized by her inscrutable and evil presence, conjures her to depart. I shall quote some of the best couplets.



' Sing to me of the labyrinth in which the twy-formed bull was stalled!  
Sing to me of the night you crawled across the temple's granite plinth

And the priests cursed you with shrill psalms as in your claws you seized  
their snake

And crept away with it to slake your passion by the shuddering palms.  
Who were your lovers? Who were they who wrestled for you in the dust?  
Which was the vessel of your lust? What leman had you, every day?  
Did giant lizards come and crouch before you on the reedy banks?  
Did Gryphons with great metal flanks leap on you in your trampled  
couch?

Did monstrous hippopotami come sidling toward you in the mist?  
Did gilt-scaled dragons writhe and twist with passion as you passed them  
by?

How subtle-secret is your smile! Did you love none, then? Nay, I  
know

Great Ammon was your bed-fellow! He lay with you beside the Nile.  
He came along the river-bank like some tall galley argent-sailed,  
He strode across the waters, mailed in beauty, and the waters sank.  
He strode across the desert sand; he reached the valley where you lay;  
He waited till the dawn of day; then touched your black breasts with his  
hand.

Before his gilded galiot ran naked vine-wreathed corybants  
And lines of swaying elephants knelt down to draw his chariot,  
And lines of swarthy Nubians bore up his litter as he rode  
Down the great granite-paven road between the nodding peacock-fans.

Ten hundred shaven priests did bow to Ammon's altar day and night  
Ten hundred lamps did wave their light through Ammon's carven house  
— and now

Wild ass or trotting jackal comes and couches in the mouldering gates;  
Wild satyrs call unto their mates across the fallen fluted drums.  
And on the summit of the pile the blue-faced ape of Horus sits  
And gibbers while the fig-tree splits the pillars of the peristyle;

Your eyes are like fantastic moons that shiver in some stagnant lake,  
Your tongue is like a scarlet snake that dances to fantastic tunes.

Away! The sulphur-colored stars are hurrying through the western  
gate!

Away! Or it may be too late to climb their silent silver cars!

What snake-tressed Fury fresh from hell, with uncouth gestures and  
unclean,

Stole from the poppy-drowsy queen and led you to a student's cell?

What songless, tongueless ghost of sin crept through the curtains of the  
night,

And saw my taper burning bright, and knocked, and bade you enter in?

Are there not others more accursed, whiter with leprosy than I?

Are Abana and Pharpar dry that you come here to slake your thirst?

It is as impossible to judge this poem by any classic standards of art as to judge the gargoyles of Notre Dame by the canons of Praxiteles. Not Apollo, but dog-faced Anubis; not gray-eyed Athena, but 'Pasht, who had green beryls for her eyes,' preside over this strange and fantastic art. The sculptor-poet chooses for his material not the white Parian marble, but gold and ivory, porphyry and granite, jasper and agate; out of these solid and richly colored substances he has carved the grotesque semblance of his dream. Sensuality has never expressed itself in more fascinating and imaginative art.

'The Ballad of Reading Gaol,' like 'The Sphinx,' is unique in kind among Wilde's works. On the whole, it must be pronounced his best poem. It was written soon after his release from prison, and its subject is the hanging of one of his fellow-prisoners. It contains few or no rhetorical flourishes; its diction is simple and poignant. Nothing could be less like 'The Sphinx' in style or substance. The only point of similarity is that both poems deal more or less with the grotesque; but in 'The Sphinx,' the poet revels in grotesque beauties; in 'The Ballad' he shudders at grotesque horrors. Above all, 'The Ballad' differs from 'The Sphinx,' and indeed from nearly all Wilde's work, in that it is passionately sincere. In reading most of Wilde's poems we cannot rid ourselves of the impression that the poet has a very delicious sense of his own cleverness and his own imaginative wealth, and that he is thinking about these things quite as much as about the subject he happens to be treating. In 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' he is desperately in earnest: the bitterness of his own prison experience is still in his mouth, and his pity for the condemned man is passionately genuine. His poem occasionally recalls 'The Ancient Mariner,' with which it is not unworthy to be compared. 'The Ballad' has less imaginative power and a

less perfect finish, but a far more poignant and crying sense of reality. 'The Ancient Mariner,' even in its more terrible passages, always suggests a dream; we constantly feel that it is all happening in the magic world of the poet's brain: whereas 'The Ballad,' even its most fantastic stanzas, has somehow the nearness and the fierceness of real life. The whole poem is illumined by the merciless noonday blaze of actuality.

'For we did not meet in the holy night,  
But in the shameful day.'

For once the barriers of Wilde's eclectic æstheticism are broken down, and he is overcome by a great emotional flood of pity and terror.

'I never saw a man who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every drifting cloud that went  
With sails of silver by.

'I walked with other souls in pain  
Within another ring,  
And wondered if the man had done  
A great or little thing,  
When a voice beside me whispered low,  
"That fellow's got to swing."

'Dear Christ! the very prison walls  
Suddenly seemed to reel,  
And the sky above my head became  
Like a casque of scorching steel;  
And though I was a soul in pain  
My pain I could not feel.

'I only knew what hunted thought  
Quickened his step, and why  
He looked upon the garish day  
With such a wistful eye:  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.'



The poet's mood changes from pity to irony.

‘ It is sweet to dance to violins  
 When Love and Life are fair;  
 To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes,  
 Is delicate and rare:  
 But it is not sweet with nimble feet  
 To dance upon the air! ’

One of the most powerful parts of the poem describes the night before the execution:

‘ That night the empty corridors  
 Were full of forms of fear,  
 And up and down the iron town  
 Stole feet we could not hear;  
 And through the bars that hid the stars  
 White faces seemed to peer.

‘ He lay as one who lies and dreams  
 In a pleasant meadowland,  
 The watchers watched him as he slept,  
 And could not understand  
 How one could sleep so sweet a sleep  
 With a hangman close at hand.

‘ The gray cock crew, the red cock crew,  
 But never came the day:  
 And crooked shapes of Terror crouched  
 In the corners where we lay:  
 And each evil sprite that walks by night  
 Before us seemed to play.

‘ They glided past, they glided fast,  
 Like travelers through a mist  
 They mocked the moon in a rigadon  
 Of delicate turn and twist,  
 And with formal pace and loathsome grace  
 The phantoms kept their tryst.

‘ “ *Oho!* ” they cried, “ *the world is wide*  
*But fettered limbs go lame!*  
*And once or twice to throw the dice*  
*Is a gentlemanly game,*  
*But he does not win who plays with Sin*  
*In the secret house of Shame.” ’*

The execution itself and the burial are treated with grim irony and touches of terrible realism.

‘ At six o’clock we cleaned our cells,  
 At seven all was still,  
 But the sough and swing of a mighty wing  
 The prison seemed to fill,  
 For the Lord of Death with icy breath  
 Had entered in to kill.

‘ He did not pass in purple pomp,  
 Nor ride a moon-white steed,  
 Three yards of cord and a sliding board  
 Are all the gallows need:  
 So with rope of shame the Herald came  
 To do the secret deed.

. . . . .

‘ He has a pall, this wretched man,  
 Such as few men can claim:  
 Deep down below a prison yard,  
 Naked for greater shame,  
 He lies with fetters on each foot,  
 Wrapt in a sheet of flame.

. . . . .

‘ He is at peace, this wretched man,  
 At peace, or will be soon:  
 There is no thing to make him mad,  
 Nor does Terror walk at noon,  
 For the lampless earth in which he lies  
 Has neither Sun nor Moon.’

We notice at once in the poem the passion for liberty which we marked at the outset as one of the central themes of Wilde’s work. Here this passion

expresses itself more concretely than in any of the earlier poems; beyond any of them, 'The Ballad' deals directly and powerfully with human life. It may be objected that the subject is unworthy; the criticism is classic, but, as Mr. Chesterton has remarked, is inapplicable to modern literature. 'The great epic of the nineteenth century . . . is about an affair commonly called contemptible, . . . a story out of a dirty Italian book of criminal trials.' Not that 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' is in any way similar to 'The Ring and The Book'; but 'The Ballad' cannot be condemned for its subject unless some of Browning's best work is similarly condemned. The subject being admitted, it is still possible to take exception to the treatment; it may be said, for instance, that Wilde's sympathy with the murderer is sentimental. This is scarcely fair; because the poet does not attempt to make a hero out of the criminal, but recognizes his guilt and the justice of his punishment; only he finds iniquity in the dealing out of justice.

' But this I know, that every law  
That men have made for Man,  
Since man first took his brother's life  
And the sad world began,  
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff  
With a most evil fan.

. . . . .

' The man had killed the thing he loved  
And so he had to die.

' And all men kill the thing they love,  
By all let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword! '

The really important thing about the poem is that it presents with sincerity and power the point of view of the imprisoned criminal. The horror of gaol life, the revulsion against the physical and moral degeneracy which it brings, the loathing of self, the fierce blind rebellion of the spirit against the injustice of justice,—these things have never before been presented in poetry with such intimate and terrible vividness.

From the astonishing variety of the poems we have considered, it is evident that the genius of Wilde possessed a marvelous flexibility. No



three poems could be more different than 'The New Helen,' 'The Sphinx,' and 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol'; yet each is a masterpiece of its kind. Additional evidence of Wilde's versatility might be found in the variety and success of his imitations. It would be easy to quote passages closely imitated from Sophocles, Theocritus, the old French poets, Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Poe, Gautier, and Baudelaire; and nearly all these imitations are admirably done. Close as many of them are, they are not slavish; they are always touched by Wilde's own genius, and subtly changed in the alembic of his imagination. The poets who have influenced him most are Keats and Gautier; to the rich sensuousness of Keats Wilde adds a certain accuracy, a hard definiteness, derived from the leader of the Parnassians. The mass of Wilde's poetic work is not large: it amounts to less than three hundred duodecimo pages in large type, with generous margins; and much of this work, as we have seen, is faulty; yet it would be hard to find, in English literature, a poet who in so small a compass exhibits greater power in greater variety. It is too early to estimate Wilde's exact rank: but this much can surely be said, that with all his limitations, no English poet, born in his generation, equals him in natural endowment or surpasses him in actual achievement. It is idle to inquire what he might have done if he had possessed artistic restraint and high seriousness, or what he might not have done if spiritual vision had been granted to him; but his own estimate of his poetic possibilities seems not boastful:

'And the mighty nations would have crowned me, who am crownless  
now and without name,  
And some orient dawn had found me, kneeling on the threshold of the  
House of Fame.'

# OMAR KHAYYAM AND MYSTICISM

BY HEReward CARRINGTON

**O**MAR heartily despised all forms of hypocrisy, and bitterly criticized the creeds then existent. But it is not true, as many think, that Omar was a sceptic and a cynic; nor is it true that he was content to sit back in sloth and idleness and dissipation, and criticize the faults and the shortcomings of others.

The frequent reference to the 'wine cup' in his verses is undoubtedly assumed as a blind, and in order more effectually to launch the shafts of cutting sarcasm at those who pretended to adhere so strongly to creeds and formulas (that Omar had long given up) and of which he saw full well the folly. Omar was a fatalist; but it was not the form of fatalism that is content to sit back and let others do the work of the world; to let others toil and slave and win their bread by the sweat of their brows. Omar was not of this caliber. He led a strenuous life; intellectually he was keenly alert and intensely active; and it is quite untrue that Omar was merely a drunkard, who spent his life alternately in the wine cup and the harem. Some of his verses would seem to indicate this, it is true; but, as stated, they were almost certainly written with the desire to portray the conditions and immorality of his day (at least, among a certain class of his fellow countrymen), and were certainly not Omar's ideal life,— for himself. Those who imagine this are deceived. His life proves the contrary. Of course, Omar put such phrases into his own mouth, in order to prevent the prompt retaliation that would surely have followed, had he attempted to openly accuse any of the various religious sects then in vogue. And it is probable that such verses represent Omar's real mood, at times. He doubtless felt (who has not ?) that, after all, this life is dull and meaningless; and he decided to make the most of the only life of which he was positively assured. But such spells of despondency and pessimism were only transitory; he soon regained his calm self-possession, and once more assumed his coldly analytical attitude. His viewpoint and philosophy were such as many a man might have held; and this, I think, can be shown in a number of ways.

Omar al-Khayyami, better known to the literary world as Omar Khayyam, was probably born in Nishapur, some time in the first quarter

of the eleventh century. He seems to have been the son of well-to-do parents,— at least parents who could afford him a liberal education, and a certain social standing, for we find his name associated with many of the most learned and cultured Persians of his time — even when a young man, and before his genius would have afforded him an *entrê* into society, no matter what his antecedents might have been! Omar seems to have shown great genius, and devoted his energies largely to the study of astronomy and mathematics — in which he excelled; and to the study of general scientific and philosophical problems,— which colored, so largely, his writings in verse,— for which he is now justly celebrated. He travelled much; was well versed in the medicine of his day; and, in spite of apparent evidence to the contrary, had carefully studied the Koran, and knew most of it by heart. He was always alive to and keenly interested in all religious problems — problems which attracted and fascinated him from the earliest childhood. He seems to have been regarded by his contemporaries as one of the first scientific men of his day.

His teachings, however, were of such a nature that no one dared follow or in which one could publicly proclaim his belief.

‘The philosophy of Omar,’ says J. K. M. Shirazi, in his ‘Life of Omar al-Khayyami,’ ‘such as it was, had been largely forced upon him by circumstances. Philosophy is not always the result of calm and patient reasoning, of a serene and dignified contemplation of human life in relation to higher things, or the inspiration of a superior intellect brought to bear upon the circumstances of mankind. More frequently than not it is the outcome of a certain experience of life, and bears the stamp of its author’s personality in combination with such influences as have gone to mold his character and environment.

‘The determining factor in the early life of Omar, as in that of every Mohammedan, was his religion — the religion of Islam with its doctrines of complete submission to the Divine Will — of Fatalism. “What must be, will be,” was the watchword of the age, inciting the most impetuous spirits to headlong conquest in the name of Allah, hypnotizing the more timid to supine acquiescence in the decrees of fate.

‘Omar would seem to have been a man in whose temperament both these characteristics were about equally blended, although the task he set himself was the attainment of knowledge, not the conquest of men. Determined, almost defiant at times in the quest of the unknown, he was yet subject to fits of despondency in which he was tempted to despair of himself, of mankind, of God, of everything. In particular, he despaired of the Mohammedan religion. As his biographers have informed us, he was thoroughly familiar with the Koran and the works of its various commentators,—



so familiar as to be regarded as an authority whose readings were worthy of the most careful consideration, however heterodox they might be in their tendencies. Thus, when he condemned, it was not in ignorance. He clearly realized that, whatever might be the possibilities of Mohammedanism when broadly and liberally interpreted, its spiritual influence on the great mass of its professors was practically *nil*. Its precepts lent themselves only too readily to make of religion a mere matter of ceremonial rites, having no bearing whatever on the conduct or the moral life of the people. . . .

‘In the course of the centuries which had elapsed since first the victorious Arabs forced their faith upon the conquered kingdom, many men had arisen throughout Persia to proclaim with fervor the faith that was in them. Jeer as Omar might at the “jarring sects,” many of them had passed through their baptism of blood and fire at the hands of the frantic populace; in not a few the devout seeker after a higher faith had found the satisfaction of his desires. Of these the only one that falls to be noticed here is the sect of the Sufis, since it is that to which Omar is held to have belonged by many educated Persians of to-day.

‘Sufism is a creed which embraces within itself elements drawn from many religions. It is a compound of Vedantism and Mohammedism and at the same time embodies one of the characteristic tenets of Christianity — the doctrine of self-sacrifice. The pantheistic element predominates. The favorite watchword of Islam, the unity of God, means for the Sufi that God is all. Sufism affirms the existence of God and of the human soul as originally one with God, to whom it is only to be reunited by the subjugation of the passions and of the power of the flesh. The devotee of Sufism must strive towards perfection through three degrees. Of these the first is the Law, wherein the Sufi is nothing more than a Moslem perfect in all the ordinances of the Koran and of blameless morality. The incentive to obedience is, however, not the fear of punishment nor hope of reward, but love. Second is the Way or Method, wherein the devotee develops into the ascetic, gives himself up to fasting in solitude and silence, studies Sufistic lore, purges himself from all worldly thoughts, and occasionally rises into a state of ecstasy. The third and final degree is certainty. The transcendental, objective God has now become subjective. The Sufi is now consciously God. The outward observations of religion are superfluous for him.’

M. Nicholas and others who have written of Omar class him without hesitation as a Sufi, but I think it very doubtful if he was one, in reality. It is more than probable that he was thoroughly in sympathy with their views, and sided with them more than with any other sect; but it would

seem that Omar was an agnostic to the end of his days. He gave adherence to no religious sect. Agnosticism, not faith, is the keynote of his works. But it is always Agnosticism modified by Mohammedanism, and a very human liking for the joys of life. When the perpetual negation of Agnosticism becomes intolerable he seeks to forget it in the delights of the senses. At one moment he is the baffled philosopher beating with angry hands against the barriers of the unseen. The next he is the reckless pleasure-seeker, intent only to quench in the wine cup the diviner age to know.

We must never forget that the Rubaiyat is not a consecutive piece of work; it represents the scattered thoughts of the author — probably extending through a number of years. In the Rubaiyat there is no closely reasoned system of philosophy: Each group of verses merely records a certain mood, the outcome of a different point of view — fatalistic, agnostic, or hedonistic, as the case may be.\* But from the whole we may, when pieced together in the mind, come to some definite conception of the writer and his creed. When thus viewed, there can be no doubt that the main theme of the author is the defense of agnosticism. And yet, he is bound to his fatalistic view of the Universe by chains he finds it impossible to break. Like Maeterlinck, Omar saw God in the form of Fate as 'some monstrous external force which compels and enslaves human beings from the outside.' Men are but 'puppets, swayed hither and thither by the mysterious influences of a destiny which they cannot understand but only obey.' And this brings us to the Rubaiyat itself — those verses for which Omar (and Fitzgerald too) are justly famous: verses which bring before us so forcibly the bent of the philosopher-poet's mind.

There is a universal belief that every poet is also more or less of a prophet, and that in his verse there are to be found, if considered rightly, certain inner, mystical meanings; and that he displays a large amount of insight into and knowledge of the essence of things, which is unobtainable by the writer of prose, and, in fact, such knowledge does not come to any but the true poet. That there is more or less foundation for this belief cannot be doubted, and it can readily be proved, I think, by considering any of the works of almost any poet we might care to discuss. This is, of course, particularly the case in such avowedly mystical verse as that of Omar

\*It must be remembered that the quatrains we know are but a small part of the whole. Thus, the Lucknow lithograph contains 770 rubaiyat; the E. H. Whinfield translation, published in London in 1883, contains 500 rubaiyat; the J. B. Nicholas Paris edition, of 1867, contains 464 rubaiyat; a Bombay lithograph, 1880, contains 756 rubaiyat; the translation by John Payne, and published by the Villon Society (London, 1898), contains 845 rubaiyat, etc.; Fitzgerald's translation is really a selection, but a wise one!

Khayyam, which deals with the deepest philosophical problems and shows that whatever the personal character of Omar might have been,— whether ascetic or sot,— he was at least a profound thinker, and had a thorough knowledge of the science, the philosophy, and the metaphysics of his day. So deeply involved in mysticism is some of Omar's verse indeed, that it is almost unintelligible to us, unless read in the light of the understanding which a study of metaphysics, of philosophy, and of psychical research phenomena gives to us. Unless we are acquainted with the fundamental problems much of his poetry loses its true significance; but that Omar Khayyam saw deeply into the inner meaning and mysteries of things there can be no question,— as I hope to make clear in the following brief discussion of some portions of his verse. The great problems of death and futurity; speculations as to the nature of the Deity; his relation to the world; fatalism, idealism, and many other deeply important questions were touched upon by Omar and treated in a manner which shows that he was acquainted with the great problems that had to be solved, though he had no means of solving them. Let us consider briefly some few of the stanzas in the light of modern philosophy and metaphysics, and see if we can interpret, and render somewhat clearer, the inner meaning of some of these verses; and at the same time show how deeply Omar had studied and considered these great questions. Modern science has, of course, discredited the idea that heaven and hell are definite *places*, but rather accepts the idea that they are (if they exist at all), certain *states* or phases of development of the individual, who reaches a certain degree of perfection according to his own efforts,— as the result of his work, and of that only; that is, he must himself achieve any results that are obtained, and while there are doubtless certain degrees of happiness which are attainable in any future state (granting that such exists), it is now generally recognized that such happiness or development can only be reached as the result of our own individual effort, and not because of the partial preference of some external Deity. All life, all development, all growth must come from within, it must well upwards and outwards from a central spring of being; that is, we must always look inward instead of outward for the real spirit that animates the universe, and if this inner subjective being is spiritually blind, and lacking in apprehension and understanding, then no amount of external knowledge can impart such understanding, for 'real knowledge is spiritual and can only be perceived by the spirit.' Now, bearing this in mind, consider how beautifully Omar expressed these thoughts when he said:

‘ I sent my Soul through the Invisible,  
Some Letter of that After-life to spell:



And by and by my Soul return'd to me  
And answered, " I Myself am Hêaven and Hell:"

' Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,  
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on Fire,  
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,  
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.'

Now let us consider this a little more fully. It will be noticed that Omar describes heaven merely as ' the *vision* of fulfilled desire,'— not the fulfillment itself; that is, it is always a little beyond our actual realization and grasp, enforcing in us a continued upward striving and effort, rather than the cessation of all such active effort — which its actual realization would bring. Consider now the second part of the verse, ' Hell the Shadow from a Soul on Fire.' Now, in the first place, anything that is ' on fire ' does not itself cause a shadow, it causes light, and for a shadow to be caused, there must be an illuminated surface, and an opaque body introduced between the light and the illuminated surface.

' Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,  
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.'

Now, I have just said that a shadow is not cast on darkness, but on an illuminated surface,— so that this verse would seem to be the exact opposite of the truth if we cannot find some other meaning than that which the actual words convey. Let us see if some other interpretation is not possible. Let us suppose a gas jet illuminating the side of a wall. It would, of course, cast light and not shadow, as I have just stated. But suppose that a *far more brilliant light* than the gas were suddenly to be introduced close behind the gas, what would be the effect? The outline of the gas flame, being so far less brilliant, would cast a *shadow*, though itself a light, and would act as an opaque body! Perhaps this verse would seem to signify that our own conscious life and will is so far less mighty and significant than that of the consciousness and will that is supposed to include us — that our own minds but serve to dim and disfigure and render less clear of expression the all-embracing consciousness of which we are presumably a fraction.

Now let us consider Omar's conception of the Deity himself. Omar very clearly held to the theory of pantheism which our modern philosophical doctrine of idealistic monism enables us to understand more thoroughly than was possible in Omar's time; subject and object, perceiver and perceived,

are but the two varying aspects of the one underlying cause which is equally both; and that Omar recognized this is clearly proved when he said, in speaking of the Deity and the drama of human life:

‘ Which for the pastime of Eternity,  
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.’

That Omar was a fatalist goes without saying, the idea of extreme fatalism running throughout his verse and rendering it at times almost despairing in tone, at others rendering him indignant or scornful. Fatalism is a different thing from the modern philosophical doctrine of determinism, though both are opposed to free-will. We have, apparently, of course, free choice in all our actions; that is, we are enabled to do what we want to do; but determinism says that we are not enabled to do anything of the kind. The fact that we can *apparently* do so is mere illusion, and that our action is in every case determined by our previous actions, environment, mode of life, and external and internal influences and causes; so that, when any action is performed, it is the result of these influences and their necessary result; i.e., we are never enabled to choose freely, or perform any action that is other than the direct and inevitable result of previous actions, thoughts, and environment. If we could get a large enough mental perception and grasp, as it were, of such forces acting upon ourselves, we could see how it is that in other cases our action is necessitated, and not the result of deliberate choice of freewill,— though the illusion of freewill will always be present.\* This differs from fatalism, as I understand it, in that it does not necessitate the planning or intervention of any external mind or Deity — other than the mental and physical forces of the universe; while fatalism supposes an external mind which has planned everything from the beginning, and each action and event as it occurs is consequently inevitable, and has been planned from the very creation of things. Doubtless such thoughts prompted Omar to write Verse 73:

‘ With Earth’s first Clay They did the Last Man knead,  
And there of the Last Harvest sow’d the Seed:  
And the first Morning of Creation wrote  
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.’

\*There might, indeed, be a distinction here, if we were to accept Mr. Meyer’s theory of a subliminal consciousness. That might be free, and the conscious mind, which is supposedly under its constant influence, be governed by it, in its actions, and so be determined. Thus, the conscious mind would be governed by a species of determinism; while the sub-conscious mind (the soul ?) would be free.

This idea that the universe is planned out, as it were, in advance is somewhat different from the doctrine which maintains that everything has, in a sense, actually happened,— we merely perceiving such actions as we reach certain states or stages in our journey through life; that is, all future events are actually existent at present, but the reason that we do not perceive them is that we have not yet arrived at the point of view that enables us to perceive them,— nor will we until the appropriate time has arrived. Perhaps we may be enabled to grasp this idea a little more fully when we consider the following simple analogy. Let us suppose ourselves on the hind platform of the rear car of a train which is traveling at a more or less rapid rate of speed. As the train moves, we perceive, at either side of us, altered scenery, and the country seems suddenly to be changed,— new scenes coming into view and others vanishing. But it will be seen that in this case the landscape newly perceived is not actually *created*; it does not come into being at the moment we perceived it; it has always existed, and the reason why it has not existed *for us* before, is that we have not been in a position to perceive it until that moment; and when the landscape recedes in the distance, it is not annihilated, but remains unaltered; but *for us* it has vanished — for the reason that we are no longer in a position to perceive it. Thus it is that events may perhaps exist in some real or ‘ noumenal ’ world which are only perceived by us, as phenomena, at certain definite stages, or times for their perception. That we are, ourselves, but phenomena, shadows,— the result, perhaps, of the thought of some intelligence or Deity,— was strongly suggested to Omar, and he meant to embody that thought, doubtless, in the following stanza:

‘ We are no other than a moving row  
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go  
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held  
In Midnight by the Master of the Show.’

At times Omar grew weary of his speculations and his philosophy, and relapsed into the attitude either of indignation at the Deity who had set such insoluble problems for man to solve; or, at other times, he would advocate drowning all thought and reflection in the wine cup; while at still other times, the humorous aspect of the whole affair would dawn upon him with irresistible force, and he advised us to retire to some secluded spot, where we could forget all such problems and

‘ In some corner of the hubbub couched  
Make game of that which makes as much of thee! ’



Yet Omar, in the end, wished some such inspiration as faith or knowledge might give, and, after his renunciation of philosophy, and advocacy of peaceful retirement and contemplation as the only method of gaining happiness, and the renouncing of one's self to the inevitable,— still he raises a piteous cry for further knowledge, for more light, for greater inspiration and support when he wrote:

‘ Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield  
One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, reveal’d,  
To which the fainting Traveler might spring,  
As springs the trampled herbage of the field! ’

This shows that Omar was after all but human, and that in spite of his renunciation of philosophy, and his advocacy of forgetting all but the present moment, he still desired and craved that for which all mankind craves — for which it continues to strive. Whether or not our knowledge will ever be such as to place these problems beyond the realm of faith, and into that of certitude remains to be seen; but the means by which this can best be accomplished are, I think, the persistent and continued investigation of the problems that arise in connection with the study of *Psychical Research*.

# THE RUBAIYAT OF TITUS LUCRETIUS CARUS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A ROMAN POET

*Rendered by G. S. Bryan*

**O**FT at the banquet, when their cups they drain  
And shade their brows with garlands, men complain:  
‘Frail creatures we, and this our little joy  
Will soon have fled past summoning again.’

As if, forsooth, thirst were a crowning woe  
Of that condition into which they go —  
As if beyond that bourne a vain regret  
For earthly trifles could torment them so!

When sleep hath set both frame and spirit free,  
All undesirous of our life are we;  
For what we reck, such rest might never end,  
Nor do we grieve then for what used to be.

Hence death far less to mortals signifies,  
When wide dispersed the mass of matter flies;  
And he whom that chill stoppage once hath reached  
Will not again awaken and arise.

To such rebuke what answer could we make,  
If thus the Soul of Things took voice and spake:  
‘Why, mortal, to o’er-sickly grief give room —  
Why wail and weep that death must overtake?’

‘If sweet thy days, nor all their good is sped,  
As idly from a leaking vessel shed —  
Then from the feasting, with thy fill of life,  
Turn to thy rest, thou fool, and do not dread.

‘ But if to thee unprofited the past,  
And in to-day nought but offense thou hast —  
Why further seek that which again must fade ?  
Why not make end of life and toil at last ?

‘ No fresh delight I hold for thee in store;  
That is and shall be that hath been of yore,  
Though thou unaged should’st live the ages down,  
Or here in life should’st tarry evermore.’

And to thyself this mays’t thou sometimes say:  
‘ Ancus the Good forsook the light of day  
(A worthier far than thou, thou impious one!),  
And many a glorious monarch passed away.

‘ Vanished the Persian that across the main  
A causeway builded for his myriad train  
And led them boldly o’er, while from his car  
He scanned the angry billows with disdain.

‘ Death with the humblest of the earth laid low  
That thunderbolt of war, great Scipio,  
The scourge of Carthage; by the selfsame road  
Bard, scholar, sage must indistinguished go.

‘ Not Homer, though the light of poesy,  
Was from the universal fortune free.  
Democritus unhesitant escaped  
Infirmities it grieved him sore to see.

‘ E’en Epicurus, whose majestic mind  
Shone like the day-star ’mid its lesser kind,  
Turned thither when the light of life was run;  
And dost thou shrink ? and would’st thou stay behind ?

‘ Why should’st thou death such heavy hardship deem,  
After thy death in life ? or wherefore seem  
Distrustful of what dreams perchance may come,  
Whose whole existence is a waking dream ?’



## THE MEDITATIONS OF HUJAS \*

**H**EAREST thou not the voice of God speaking in thy soul,  
Hujas seeker of truth?  
Close thine eyes and listen.  
Shut the gates of thy soul to the unrealities of sense.  
Withdraw into the Temple of the Spirit where no man  
entereth in the flesh. There shalt thou learn wisdom.  
Therein abideth knowledge.

And I, Hujas, putting aside from me the teachings of men, obeyed the voice of God and was taught of the Spirit which is God, and which dwelleth in the Temple where no man may enter till he dieth to the world of things and the delusions of the flesh.

Ask not on what far peak is builded the Temple where I, Hujas, was taught of the Spirit and learned the wisdom of the gods.

Only he who seeketh in his own soul shall find the way thereto.

Of what avail that I speak of the Spirit to them that are blinded by dilutions and bound in the chains of appetite?

Men learn not Truth till the desire for knowledge thereof springeth in the soul as a seed that puts forth leaf and bud and bloom.

\*NOTE. The tablets of sun-baked clay upon which these "Meditations" were originally inscribed, were unearthed, so the story runs, from the ruins of a temple, by nomads while digging for water in the Persian desert. By devious ways they came into the possession of one whose chief claim to recognition lay in the fact that he was the patron of a man of science and learning who, being skilled in 'knowledge of ancient tongues,' was attracted by the mystery of the hieroglyphs and set himself the task of deciphering them.

This work became, he records, 'the study of my leisure hours. Long did I labor to wrest from the lifeless clay the meaning of that which was thereon inscribed.

'Word by word did I interpret these sayings, hid in signs and symbols of a forgotten age, and great was my joy in that the meditations of the sage, Hujas, bore witness that the heart of man changeth not with the roll of centuries.'

We are authorized to publish the Meditations by one who is known to the world as scholar, philosopher, and poet, and we believe their exalted beauty and truth will appeal to all earnest readers.

LISCHEN M. MILLER  
ALMA A. ROGERS

As the dewdrop gleameth in the morning sun is the soul of man absorbed into the Sun of the Spirit which pervadeth all and is all.

But as the seed beareth not the fruit of another, but of its own kind, so loseth I not mine own form, shaped and fashioned by the thought of God.

By desire is the soul winged.

On the pinions of desire soareth the soul back to the Beginning.

In the mighty stream that floweth from the center of the universe beyond the world of stars have I dipped the wings of my soul!

Open are the doors to my soul, and to me are given visions unseen of men.

Closed are mine eyes to the desires and limitations of the flesh.

In silence do I wait——

In calm is my soul bathed ——

Lifted up by the desire of my soul am I!

Then I, Hujas, being taught, not of men but of gods, lifted up the voice of my soul, crying, "Whence cometh Life? And whither goeth the soul?"

And the gods answered me: "Life cometh from God alone. And the soul returneth to God who gave it being."

O Thou great God whom men know not!

Far removed am I from the habitations of men, yet am I not alone. The gods comfort me, and by the lesser gods am I instructed in the ways of Truth.

I, Hujas, seeking solitude, have found fellowship.

O Thou who art from everlasting unto everlasting! Hear thou the cry of my soul for light!

I, Hujas, turn from the paths of men to prostrate myself before thee!

Dead was I to the delusions of sense. Mine eyes were closed to the sights of earth. Saw I not the peaks whereon lay the untouched snows of winter, gleaming in the summer sun. The rocks and trees were not, neither the clay upon which my flesh reclined, nor the sky overhead.

Lifted up was I and borne afar, and great was my joy to learn of gods that which men teach not.

And I, Hujas, being taught of the gods, returned unto the habitations of men where dwelleth the priests, who hailed me prophet and seer.

Spake I unto them the wisdom which I had learned when, my soul being lifted up, I listened to the teachings of the lesser gods.

Dull are the priests of the temple where I once did serve, and heavy with the desires of the flesh and the drinking of wine.

As those who, hearing, yet hear not, receive they my words of wisdom. Willing are they to bow down and believe, dull is their understanding, and the desire for wisdom is not in them.

I, Hujas, perceiving that until the soul crieth for wisdom, all teaching is vain, speak no more. But for the enlightenment of them that shall be born unto the flesh when my flesh is become dust, blown about by the winds of the desert, inscribe I the teachings of the gods.

In the solitude of the high places where I learned of the gods, many things were given me to know which I inscribe not.

Foolish are words, and powerless to carry the knowledge which the gods impart, not in speech, but in silence, to the soul of man.

When thou desirest not the desires of the flesh, the glories that refresh the soul are bestowed upon thee and thou hungerest not.

Out of Truth was the soul of man created.

Truth is the heritage of the soul.

My soul will not be filled till I have found the way to the well of Truth that floweth from the heart of God as a spring floweth from the hidden fount in the desert.

Desire is the voice of the soul that calleth for its own.

Shall a man seek Truth yet hold to the things of the flesh?

Such an one findeth not Truth, nor aught but sorrow and unrest of spirit.

The Temple of Truth is not built with hands, neither of stones laid one upon another.

Out of God's thought is it builded and only the soul dwelleth therein, and the delusions of the flesh findeth no entrance.

Count not the days of thy desire. Limit not the years of thy seeking. In the Temple of Truth where the gods abide, time is not.



Prone upon the earth lieth the flesh of him who knocketh with insistence at the door of the Temple of Truth.

Not the flesh but the soul entereth the Temple where the gods teach.

Doth the flesh hunger? Say it not. Until the soul claimeth it again it knoweth not pain nor thirst.

This learned I, Hujas, in the Temple of Truth which is builded by the strength of desire.

Did I, Hujas, tremble before the gods in the Temple where I sought wisdom?

Say it not. The soul of the seeker after Truth knoweth not fear. Neither fainteth the self in the presence of the gods who have known mortal experience.

Kin is the seeker to the immortal gods.

I, Hujas, learned this of mine own soul: The gods are kin to all men who strive and are not content in the bonds of the flesh.

Out of thy desire groweth the wings of thy soul.

By desire is shaped thy course through the heavens where even the stars fail.

By desire art thou preserved in that flight.

By desire alone returneth to the prone flesh wherein thou abideth till the hour of thy deliverance.

# THE POETRY OF LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON

BY ARTHUR FRANKLIN JOHNSON

ONCE a poet, who had been reading aloud to me some lyric of Mrs. Browning's, laid the book on his knees and exclaimed triumphantly: 'Isn't it perfect! Isn't it beautiful! It could have been written only by a woman.' Though never since have I been able to find the particular poem that inspired his words, I have never forgotten how satisfactory they were; and they seem no less fitting or gallant a tribute, if repeated now in connection with the poetry of Louise Chandler Moulton.

This application is perhaps even better. Mrs. Browning had no special bounds, and sought the depths of analysis with a boldness almost masculine, shirking nothing ambition suggested, nor did she hesitate to try the hardest of unhewn paths: whereas the poet I am considering kept strictly within her allotted realm,—the only one she instinctively understood,—never letting her imagination, however willing, stray beyond the boundary of her own experience.

It was an experience, though limited, richly endowed. Youth was for her so sweet and so radiant, that she wished nothing more than to have it last on, untarnished, forever.

' Her only hope, sore spent with life's long pain,  
In some glad morning to be born again.'

And, indeed, it was the background of all her moods. She knew the beauty of love so well that she never quite dared presume she had been blessed by its presence. So was there doubt, terror, sometimes, in the midst of her most joyous hours. For consolation, she had an infinite willingness to believe, the desire to love all a little and trust all somewhat, the ungrateful as well as the devoted. Sensitive, a dreamer, impractical in many of the ways of life, she passed little of it in solitude; rather, surrounded by friends, distinguished members of her profession, acquaintances of all kinds, who found her the most sociable, lovable, generous of companions, she was used

alike to the gay and the serious. But with whomever she was, she never departed from her own natural bent; however interested, she never wished to cope with events great or small outside her own sphere: she was never an explorer, a reformer, a fighter. Thoroughly independent of the world's opinion, with her own rare ideas of right and wrong, she was always a poet and always a woman. And her poetry is the mirror, clear, limpid, unspotted by any blemishes of style, which contains the beautiful reflection of her personality and experience.

Feeling this, the lover of poetry, pleased even with her duller moments, delights in the long vista of beautifully composed passages of leisure and fancy; the leisure of a woman-poet, who never sewed or gave herself to household tasks, whose great resource was to write as she felt, which she could always do, with facility and elegance unfailing. Nothing is more charmingly characteristic than this description of 'Midsummer.'

'The spacious noon enfolds me with its peace—  
 The affluent midsummer wraps me round —  
 So still the earth and air, that scarce a sound  
 Affronts the silence, and the swift caprice  
 Of one stray bird's lone call does but increase  
 The sense of some compelling hush profound,  
 Some spell by which the whole vast world is bound,  
 Till star-crowned night smile downward its release.  
 I sit and dream — midway of the long day —  
 Midway of the glad year — midway of life —  
 The whole world seems, for me, to hold its breath:—  
 For me the sun stands still upon his way —  
 The winds for one glad hour remit their strife—  
 Then day, and year, and life whirl on toward death.'

There were rainy days lost in books. There were busy days, too, days spent in travel, journeys through new cities, mornings in cathedrals and picture galleries, visits, twilight loiterings in the country, redolent of night-  
 ingales and roses —

'Roses that briefly live,  
 Joy is your dower;  
 Blest be the fates that give  
 One perfect hour.



‘ And, though too soon you die,  
In your dust glows,  
Something the passerby  
Knows was a rose.’

She wrote of them all.

Still more she wrote of herself, with a plaintive touch which gave to her simple, direct expression, the richness of secrecy. So in the dedication to her first poems — she bids them farewell:

‘ With spring this country was all verdurous  
When first you came;  
Its leafage of sweet songs solicitous,  
Its skies aflame.

‘ With dreaming of the summer’s warm delights;  
Streams sought the sea;  
White moons made beautiful the waiting nights;  
Your wings were free.

‘ Fly hence, swift wings,— I have been glad with you  
In life’s glad spring;  
Heard summer songs, and thought their promise true;  
But now take wing.’

The note of sadness is always present. Sometimes it is pleasantly blent with playfulness, love of the mysterious, delicate longings ingenuous as her childhood, which she never wholly outgrew.

‘ I dwell no more in Arcady:—  
But when the sky is blue with May,  
And flowers spring up along the way,  
And birds are blithe, and winds are free,  
I know what message is for me,—  
For I have been in Arcady.’

Sometimes her sorrow is lightened by a frail determination to trust, still to love and be loved, come what may,— as in the poem which begins:

‘ I sit and wait for you, dear, my dear,  
Now the sun is low,

From the far-off town the path runs clear,  
 And the way you know —  
 The old, old way that brought you here,  
 In the long ago.'

She always maintained her poise, seldom admitting, at any rate, abandonment to an interest. Yet was she by no means submissive and quietly patient in her disappointments; at such times a wit, peculiar to a chosen number of her sex, would come to the rescue.

'I do not blame thee for thy heedless playing  
 On the strong chords whose answer was so full'

is the gracious justice she administers to one who has deceived her, dealt with a sense of assurance and rebuff nearly matchless. But the fleetingness of things, not merely the vanishing of sensuous charms, rather that which meant the inevitable end of all she loved, she never ceased to anticipate and to mourn. Even in her youngest days the coming of death was an almost visible blight on the reality of everything.

'And yet had love been love he had not died.'

To overcome the ever-impending desolation, she vainly courted the comforting promises of faith; even tried to look forward to the possibility of old habits and pleasures, enduring in their accustomed forms after death,—

'Some wild, sweet fragrance of remembered days,'

and pictured the loveliness of rest,

'Nay I shall be in my low silent home,  
 Of all earth's gracious ministries aware,'

even the while death had for her the hideousness of the grave and the great unknown.

'When we confront the vastness of the night,  
 And meet the gaze of her eternal eyes,  
 How trivial seem the garnered gains we prize —  
 The laurel wreath we flaunt to envious sight;

The flower of love we pluck for our delight;  
The mad, sweet music of the heart, that cries  
An instant on the listening air,— then dies —  
How short the day of all things dear and bright!  
The everlasting mocks our transient strife;  
The pageant of the universe whirls by  
This little sphere with petty turmoil rife —  
Swift as a dream and fleeting as a sigh —  
This brief delusion that we call our life,  
Where all we can accomplish is to die.'

It is all distinctly the poetry of a lady, a great lady, who had no particular message for the world, at least none that she sought to express in her poems; but who offered much, if not more valuable, often more attractive, and surely more feminine. She was simply a poet, not a poet with a purpose; with no particular ambitions, indeed, except those which grew out of love for her work, that and the ideals of happiness, right living and generosity. Her poet's mission was to give herself.

Among the best of her poems, not few in number, and all adorned with perfectness of workmanship, the lover of poetry shall find many exquisite themes, the most human of thoughts and emotions, some real lyrics, and sonnets to be favorably compared with any that have been produced by Americans. And finally, with a true sense of the talents and achievements of Louise Chandler Moulton, he shall pause here and there to exclaim: 'Isn't it perfect! Isn't it beautiful! It could have been written only by a woman.'

# DIZAINO—FROM THE VERSE OF THE DUCHESS OF ROCHE - GUYON

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

**I**NALIENABLY linked with the pleasure of a summer afternoon spent in the grounds of the Petit Trianon, is the recollection of a gracious and beloved lady who stood to our little party (Russian and American) as hostess, in that pathetic picture-palace-and-garden precinct. In truth, sometimes, as we walked and talked, that summer afternoon, or talked resting in the rustic chairs near where Marie Antoinette and her ladies for a brief time played at being dairy maids, —I was inclined to the impression that the young queen had never suffered guillotine, but had softly aged somewhat in that beautiful retreat of hers; remaining to give us welcome and guest rites, and now known to those who love her much as the Duchesse de la Roche-Guyon; and — still better, as a poetess possessed of an exquisite lyric touch! It could be added, that the dear and winning personality (whom our fancy thus suggested as an undying Marie Antoinette), is possessed of many other distinguishing characteristics and spiritual gifts than those which establish her title as a true daughter of the muse: for I learned that our *Duchesse*, despite the aristocratic traditions that stretched in long line behind her, was much of a sympathizer with republican tendencies,—loved foreigners and had espoused the cause — in its day — of the deeply wronged Dreyfus! Life had touched her to a gentle, almost cheerful sadness; and there was a faint smile in her blue eyes — even while she averred, in pensive negation, “*Non, non, la vie — c’est pessimisme!*” as a mutual friend, an Englishman, was being criticized for the discouraging views he had expressed in a recent book. We were thus prepared for the fact that the volume of verse by our *Duchesse* (our Marie Antoinette *rediviva*) should be entitled *La Vie Sombre*. Yet, within the shadow which it throws, this verse holds many a lovely flower — many a hardy bloom, too, of a brave, truthful, and challenging spirit! A few renderings therefrom are subjoined; and yet a few others, which are delicate, playful transcripts of childlife and its *bon mots*, — these last taken from another collection of her verse, entitled ‘*La Volière Ouverte*,’ a most charming inscription for a nest of singing birds fluttering out into a morning world of sunshine and dewdrops! In the translations offered, it must be



admitted, the translator has used large privilege as regards choice of meter, shortening the lines even where the gayety or whimsicality of the subject seemed to warrant such license: though the set form of ten lines each (*dizain*) has been invariably retained in these translations.

## FROM LA VIE SOMBRE

## A REED

I am no clarion, tambourine, nor chorded shell;  
My song is not for earthly powers nor powers enskied;  
A fragile reed,— the evening winds alone could tell  
What murmurs, touched with twilight, I to them confide:  
The intimate least sigh of youngest, frailest things,  
Mysterious, rustling sound of softly shaken wings.  
Refrains so timid, Echo takes of them no heed . . .  
The fisherman may hear — he hears but to forget;  
And, passing, in the silent lake he casts his net.  
Now, who would any reverence pay unto a reed ?

## PAX

Oh, do not vex the nest, nor alien finger lay  
Upon the brooded eggs; and, if a bird alights  
Upon the branch, with softest footfalls go thy way.  
Let be the silkworm spinning in its cloister white;  
Lade not the skiff with freight too heavy to be borne;  
Enshade the torch from eyes the daylight has outworn;  
Let sail away the swan, to skies without a stain;  
Break not the vernal branch where sleeping blossoms teem;  
Salute all labor: thou, thyself, in peace remain;  
Revere the poet,— ay, but leave him to his dream!

## THE MIRROR

On sunless days my childhood bore as best it might,  
Some marvelous romance oft times would invent.  
Then self-transformed, I was a fairy princess bright;  
In waves of ribbon decked, and gems magnificent,  
I hastened to the glass, this splendor to survey!

## DIZAINO

But ah, beneath the childish brow what drama lay —  
 What shadow unconsolated was in the childish glance,  
 I never knew — but only this, that when, perchance,  
 I would have smiled, to soothe that shadow's fears,  
 All suddenly I found myself in silent tears!

## MY SOUL

Had Fate my soul endued with man's, not woman's, frame,  
 Still, still, I do believe my soul had been the same.  
 Not bent to foolish vanity nor vain delights,  
 Not resting till it reached the destined heaven-heights.  
 My dream of honor — it had never been to see  
 The wretched beg for grace, the humble bend the knee,  
 To make the grassblade of the field or lofty pine,  
 Or armèd troops,— or sparrows, quake at step of mine!  
 As man, the same desire that I, as woman, own,  
 Had still prevailed,— to see great Justice on the throne!

## FROM LA VOLIÈRE OUVERTE

## JUSTICE

I asked myself (deep question and obscure),  
 If Justice here had never dwelling sure.  
 When lo! sans mask herself the goddess showed —  
 As I was walking, crossed my very road!  
 A big and little schoolboy (truants they —  
 And very bored) sought some new form of play,  
 When, 'Let's hold court, with me for judge,'  
 The big boy said,— 'to put the law in force!'  
 'And I?' the small boy asked. 'Why, you — you'll be  
 The guilty one that I shall punish — see?'

## CURIOSITY

When Blanche of a little new sister first heard,  
 She skipped like a lamb, and sang like a bird;

And every time, as she danced that way,  
Touched the dainty crib where the baby lay.  
' Hush! ' said mamma, ' your sister, my love,  
Is tired, for she's just come from heaven above.  
Don't wake her, speak softly — that's a good girl."  
' Mamma! ' cried Blanche in a perfect whirl,  
' Please let me ask her (I know she can tell  
When she's just come from heaven) — *if God is well!* '

## INDISCRETION

' When any one asks you, Madeline, dear,  
What toy you wish for your birthday this year,  
" *Whatever you like,*" is what you must say.'  
(Oh, ancient discourse — the wise parent's way!)  
. . . Now, the little one coverts a watch that can strike;  
So, when uncle asks her, ' What would you like,—  
My angel just come like a ray from the skies  
To light this dark world and gladden my eyes! '  
The darling responds, ' *Whatever you like* —  
That is, — if it's only a watch that can strike! '

## LAST WORDS FROM SIDNEY LANIER

**A**N autobiography of a poet's fugitive creative moods may be said to be given to view in the 'Poem Outlines' by Sidney Lanier, found among his papers and just published.

Lovers of Lanier will especially cherish such last words, broken and warm from his own lips. Many will be interested in these flitting fancies and brief sayings for their own sake. And students or curious observers of our slowly evolving American poetry will find in them a peculiarly characteristic revelation. For the unusual volume, devotedly offered to the public by Mrs. Lanier, tells an intimate story.

It consists of brief memoranda, but not of external events, nor of any interior events put in the light of a consecutive train of thought. Although it occasionally parallels some passage in Lanier's published poems, it throws little light on the conception, considered as a whole, of any one poem. It is made up of casual jottings of poetic or literary material — flitting conceptions and impressions. A leaf of prose sprouts gravely here, a tentative bright bud of verse gleams there.

These broken memoranda were gathered from pencillings on envelope backs, margins of music programs, and other such scraps of paper at Lanier's hand at the moment. Since most of the fragments were destined not to find completer expression, these hundred and score pages of wide-margined easy reading given up to them constitute a new word from the poet. The collector's statement that 'they give, perhaps, his most intimate revelation, his highest utterance,' seems in part justified. They yield a sense of intimacy, as if one had come upon fresh traces of a lonely trail along which the genius of Lanier had strolled. But for his 'highest utterance,' surely, that is still to be found among his published poems.

Yet the suggestion is an interesting one that hidden and groping here for the light of day may be found some 'mute inglorious Milton' of mere impression, capable, if conditions had been favorable, of unfolding past the height Lanier elsewhere attained.

One is ready to take up the volume with such a quest in mind. It may be laid down tenderly with renewed sympathy for Lanier's art and his

\*Poem Outlines by Sidney Lanier, New York. Charles Scribners's Sons, 1908.



wistful moods and aspirations; and if not with full conviction that the highest of these transient utterances outclimbs his achievement by any unique latency then, at least, one is spared one more poignant example of the tragic unfulfilled in human life.

A fragment proffered by the book itself is chosen for repetition on the title page as the motto of the whole:

‘The Artist: he  
Who lonesome walks amid a thousand friends.’

If it is true that this is especially suited to Lanier, it is also true that from this book alone, considered as a self-revelation of the poet, he is to be seen as one not at all in love with loneliness. He seems here to be decidedly not one of the strong, self-resilient souls rendered peculiarly self-poised and capable by solitude of spirit. Another of these fragments might fitly supplement the chosen motto:

‘I will be the Terpander of Sadness;  
I will string the shell of slow time for a lyre,  
The shell of tortoise-creeping time,  
Till grief grow music.’

Just this plaintiveness of spirit, prone to cry out against disease, the hardness of life, or ‘the failure of contemporary men to recognize genius,’ or the sharpness of God’s wind for the thinly clad brings Lanier very near, however, to the heart of his fellowmen. His disappointments in life and in them made him yearn over them. And if he did not give them of his strength he gave them of his tenderness:

‘I made me a song of Serenade,  
And I stole in the Night, in the Night,  
To the window of the world where man slept light,  
And I sang:  
O my Love, my Love, my Fellow man, my Love.’

The leaves of prose outnumber the buds of verse. Among the few, full-blown enough to betray the color of the flower, is a fragmentary song of Aldhelm — a poet who was strong enough to grapple with the hearts of his fellows. It is doubtless so named in memory of that early Saxon minstrel who stood with his harp on the highway and challenged men to hear him as they passed over to the marketplace.

# LAST WORDS FROM SIDNEY LANIER

## THE SONG OF ALDHELM

Come over the bridge, my merchants,  
 Come over the bridge, my souls:  
 For ye all are mine by the gift of God,  
 Ye belong to me by the right of my love,  
     I love  
 With a love that is father and mother to men,  
 Ye are all my children, merchants.

*Merchant:* We have no time, we have no time to listen to  
 idle dreams.

*Aldhelm:* But, I, poor Aldhelm, say you nay;  
 Till ye hear me, ye have no time;  
 Neither for trade nor travelling;  
 Till ye hear me ye have no time to fight nor marry nor  
     mourn;  
 There is not time, O World,  
 Till you hear me, the Poet Aldhelm,  
 To eat nor to drink nor to draw breath.  
 For until the Song of the Poet is heard  
 Ye do not live, ye cannot live.  
 O noonday ghosts that gabble of losing and gaining,  
 Pitiful paupers that starve in the plenteous midmost  
 Of bounty unbounded.

It will be readily enough seen that this is a piece neither filed nor developed enough to give forth the beauty and fragrance ideally requisite. Yet as it stands the poetic idea has a fund of charm and meaning. Aldhelm, as a symbol of the strong poet's call to sing with authority (and, as Lanier would have it, with honor) in the public places of a world recklessly given over to the engrossing gods of trade and gain, stands for the sturdiest craving of Lanier. Is this in him, as in Whitman, also, though differently tending, an American trait?

This natural longing of a poet born of a democratic people made Lanier restless, discontented, if not desperately disheartened by the deaf ears sure to abound in marketplaces. One of the prose fragments here set down is a full confession of it:

'I, the artist, fought with a Knight that was cased in a mail of gold:

and my weapon, with all my art, would not penetrate his armor. Gold is a soft metal, but makes the hardest hauberk of all. What shall I do to pierce this covering? For I am hungry for this man, this business man of stocks and dry-goods, and now it seems as if there were no pleasure nor hope nor life for me until I win him to my side.'

Against the claims of Science, too, in some degree, as well as against those of Materialism, the spirit of Lanier was wont to hurl itself. Signs appear here witnessing that his serenity had been bruised and sometimes daunted by the struggle between religion and science, generally laying its mark upon the thought of nineteenth-century writers. Yet this struggle irresistibly attracted him. His fancy fluttered about it, and he longed to master it. The mood of strength to harmonize the two interests whose opposition troubled him comes out at least once in a sententious expression here recorded:

'Our beliefs needed pruning that they might bring forth more fruit: and so Science came.'

It is not easy to suppose that Lanier ever dreamed of making such an utterance as that the basis of a poem. Not merely dictums of this pithy sort, but other fragments, of a distinctly poetic kind, metaphors and comparisons jotted down by him, bear no evidence that he intended to build a poem on them or round about them. The title, 'Poem Outlines,' does not happily apply, for example, even to such an entry as this:

'Birth is but a folding of our wings'—a kindred idea to Wordsworth's famous lines: 'Our birth's but a sleep and a forgetting.' Or this lovely imagery which brings with it the sense of early evening starlight:

'Stardrops lingering after sunlight's rain.'

There are, however, some entries that fully justify the title. One such entry, called 'A Garden Party,' bears obvious signs of being outlined in prose for future working up in verse.

This mode of poetic workmanship is not an attractive one. It may be questioned whether it would be apt to lead toward a perfect artistic unit. Can poetic conception and its ultimate utterance be disjointed and held apart from each other, outside of the emotional cerebration of the poet, and be kept conveniently asunder thus in a cooled state ready to be welded together happily later by dint of conscious elaboration?

Another question, twin to the first, arises. Did Lanier, whose contention was so emphatically made for musical rhythm as essential to poetry, often write after this peculiar mode?

One of Emerson's most consummate poems, 'Seashore,' appears as a prose theme in a journal of his visit to Pigeon Cove, as well as in blank verse among his poetic works. Yet one feels confident, by intuition of the ways of Emerson's mind, that the same subject absorbed it each time for each sort of expression; he surely did

'not his brain encumber  
With the coil of rhythm and number,  
But, leaving rule and pale forethought,  
Climbed for his rhyme'

to that exalted emotionalizing of the impression of the sea he gained at Cape Ann, although his mind also approached it, in like manner but more calmly, at another time, in prose.

Lanier's prose for his whimsical 'Garden Party' has no poem to match. We can only marvel what it would have become in the transfiguring process when we read this with its attached footnote:

#### A GARDEN PARTY

Invitation brought by the wind, and sent by the rose and the oak. I sat on the steps — warm summer noon — in a garden, and half cloudy with low clouds, sun hot, rich mockingbird singing, bee brushing down a big raindrop from a flower, where it hung tremulous. The bird's music is echoed from the breasts of roses, and reflex sound comes doubly back with grace of odor. First came the lizard, dandiest of reptiles; then the bee, then small, strange insects that wear flapwings and spider-web legs, and crawl up the slim green stalks of grass; the catbirds, the flowers, with each, a soul — this is the company I like; the talk, the gossip anent the last news of the spirit, the marriage of man and nature, the betrothal of Science and Art, the failure of the great house of Buy and Sell (see following note\*), a rumor out of the sun, and many messages concerning the stars.

Of the 'Hymns of the Marshes' a shred of an outline may be traced in this highly suggestive fragment:

'The courses of the wind, and the shifts thereof, as also what way the clouds go; and that which is happening a long way off; and the full face of

\*Buy and Sell failed because Love was a partner. 'This Love now, who is he?' said a comfortable burgher oak. 'I hear much of him these later days.' Why Love, he owneth all things: trees and land and water power.



the sun; and the bow of the Milky Way from end to end; as also the small, the life of the fiddler-crab, and the household of the marsh-hen; and more, the translation of black ooze into green blade of marsh-grass, which is as if filth bred heaven:

‘This a man seeth upon the marsh.’

Whoever may be repelled by the implication that in this volume are to be found a collection of mere skeletons and loose bones of verse, not yet clothed with the allurements proper to them and numbly awaiting the in-breathing of life, may be consoled to learn that there are really not many such outlines of poems in the rough to be formed here. This sketchbook of a poet is better than its name; but its contents are so varied in interest and so desultory that it was doubtless hard to find a single brief title. Its sufficient title to special attention is that it offers us intimacy with a sensitive poetic soul at moments of imaginative seedtime seldom open to any eye.

## A FORGOTTEN ART

BY JEANNETTE MARKS

‘**T**HERE is another pleasure for the world gone down the wind;’— and piping will not bring it back. It is the pleasure of the quiet pathway, flicked with shadows and eager with the life of small, sweet things: eyes in the grass, stir in the brush, patter of falling blossoms, and song in the tasselled reeds. It is the pleasure of the simple life, for its joys: the music of wind and leaf; the colors of earth, brown and blue and green and gold; the flight of birds; the dancing of children, and love. It is the pleasure of plenty unsurfeited, desire satisfied, and content. It is the pleasure of doing without, the assurance that what you wish you have, and of light on the pathway. It is the pleasure of doing without; it knows nothing at heart of the crowding of men and affairs; its peace is its human safety. Its resiliency is native and it can no more be crushed than the bird in air. It is the pleasure of the simple life, a joy which if we have it at all must be wholly dependent upon foresight. Between it and the common life lies a barrier of slavery and cities and war; it is no longer a common heritage, but merely a chance for escape.

Symmetry may express this simplicity; nature repeats the lesson in star, in cloud, in flower. There is, too, a symmetry, a simplicity of melody, like that of Handel or Schubert. But our modern music resembles our modern life; it is the music of Wagner or MacDowell, the conflict of incident with only a motif of melody, broken, incomplete. Dissonance is fundamental and the rhythm of melody comes merely as a suggestion.

It is not in symmetry, which is of the very spirit of the simple life, but in ‘interruption’ that we find our rest to-day. The quality of interruption shows itself in all we do: in amusements, in reading, in studies, and in household arts. Even a man as true and fine in his service to art as William Morris was subject to it in design for wall paper and carpet, in design for book and arras tapestry. A pattern repeating itself is broken up to such an extent that it panders to our endless desire for variety. Morris’s ‘Trellis’ wall paper is a heinous instance of this. Interruption shows itself also in the broken lines of our modern buildings. This lesson of the broken line we

have learned in part from nature: from the branches of trees, the crinkling of the horizon, the skyline of mountains. But nature does not teach us our modern lack of self-control in its use of the fruitless brevity of much we undertake. Interruption shows itself, too, by the way we live from day to day only; although we have an immortality before us yet each day disappears with the ephemera of nothings. There has been a pagan past more durable. Practically the list of our ephemeral workers is the census of the modern world,—again the broken line, for continuity seems impossible of attainment.

In simplicity there is a certain completeness, a certain unity of effect that holds instead of dissipates the attention. It is the completeness of the useful and the beautiful together in which we cannot tell where the useful ends and the beautiful begins. It has in it nothing of the tortuous lines of our modern houses of the dessicating glare of our modern lighting; in its rest and quiet there are skylines and shadows. We seek not only the pleasure of singleness, a spiritual quality of final value, but also the single pleasure. The Japanese are to-day the only people who appreciate the value of the simple incident, the one flower, the single vase, the odd number.

Beauty is mutable, but there comes once in some hundreds of years what seems the changeless word: the song of Sappho, the harp of the Cymri, the music of Keats. In its human terms beauty is the expression of personality; in its outward aspects it may have as wide divergences as people. Men call this an age of individualism; nevertheless, it is an age lacking in individualities and in the personal expression of beauty. We are auxiliary to the demands of our multiplex lives, like the man to the machine, and as machinery has taken away our hand arts so has it taken away from us our simplicity and individuality. We let the machinery of living pass as an equivalent for thought; we reflect less upon the value of the individual lives we lead, and therefore put upon them a lower estimate. We are become in our ways a product of machine manifolding, with all its agility, cheapness, and perishableness. We multiply our needs and force others to satisfy them; so long as this is done we deny not only others but also ourselves the possibility of a great pleasure, a life which is as instinct with fine art and as free from commonplaceness, crowding, and unrest as a canvas of Corot. What is the arbiter of to-day? What other people do; we see it in clothes, in houses, in ways of living. All this is precisely the opposite of what personality implies.

'Results' is nowadays a word by which to conjure: statistics, dividends, output. The art of commerce is profit, but the art of simplicity is of the spirit, and looks to the aim and not to the result. Only as we prize the aim

higher than the result do we come close to the eager, unbroken life each one desires. The law of commerce is competition; the law which simplicity puts upon us is the law of equilibrium; it balances in a fine scale not the value of one but of two senses.

Simplicity must make us happier or it is worth nothing; in the demands put upon it, it is akin to art. It restrains restlessness; it has the same effect as an embodied art, making men better as well as happier. Simplicity is fruitful; it is rest set at rest and not rest pricked by the consciousness of unrest. It is the pleasure of the quiet pathway; it is the possession of those joys which may belong, not to a few alone, but to all men, homes beautiful as well as useful, the quiet heart if not the quiet hour, the color of earth, the light of the sky, and love.



## LIFE AND LETTERS

‘GOOD verse is thought packed tight for a long journey; but only here and there in all literature is there such tight packing as in the verse of Emerson, and no limit can be safely named to the length of its journey down the tide of time.

‘Emerson’s highest artistic quality has in it always a suggestion of miracle, . . . the sentence, the phrase, creates in the mind a sense of luminousness, so keen is the vibration. This may be said of all works of high artistic genius, but in the case of Emerson the miraculously luminous effect is peculiarly felt.’

So says a poet, Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, of Emerson, in his excellent introduction to the alluring little volume recently published in the Thumb Nail Series. This tiny tome contains a select trio of Emerson’s Essays, namely, ‘Power,’ ‘Success,’ and ‘Greatness,’ together with a portrait frontispiece from the daguerreotype of 1854.

Americans will have attained to a height of perception of essential beauty in art that must prove favorable for something beyond the prevailing strain of technically adroit, but spiritually unquickening verse, when a keen sense of Emerson’s unique quality as a poet has seized them and spread widely among them.

His inspiring genius catches us up to a pinnacle of winged emotion so far beyond the level of any other of our country’s poets that there is no ground of any consequence in comparison left for flaw-picking as to the method of his magic. That method which reaches the heights is necessarily good; none the worse that critics must soar beyond their usual picket-fence to follow the range of its flight; better, that none but this magician can master its secret. Ever

‘Let the Muse be bound with garlands of her own.’

How curious it is that rarefied as Emerson’s emotional fervor is, he should be the only one of our dominant elder American poets — Whitman, Poe, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell,— to write of the transport of exalting love? The flames of commingled ardor and insight leap beyond all ordinary bounds in his ‘Give all to Love,’ ‘Rhea,’ ‘Hermione,’ ‘Initial, Dæmoniac, and Celestial Love,’ ‘Bacchus.’

Mr. Gilder, of course, has not discussed Emerson’s verse in detail in an introduction to a volume of his prose, but in the course of his theme, ‘Our

Inheritance in Emerson,' his enthusiasm for Emerson's poetic power has place. It spurs ours also to speech. As to the occasional roughness of Emerson's verse, he conjectures that this 'is a probably unintentional enhancement of the clear, melodious cadences that so often occur, charming the mind and ear with an unearthly music. Harsh and limping as much of his verse may be, there are lines, couplets, stanzas, and whole poems that have about them the flavor of immortality. Hating jingle, he sometimes stumbled into discord,— but for all that there is no poet that has written on this side of the water who has produced so many lines of poetry not only weighty with deep and novel thought, but beautiful in form and texture,— with a beauty like Shakespeare, like Shelley (whom he underrated), like Keats. When Emerson's line is good, it is unsurpassably good — having a beauty not merely of cadence, but of inner, intense, birdlike sound: the vowels, the consonants, the syllables are exquisitely musical. It may be said of Emerson as of Michelangelo, when he "deigns to be beautiful" how piercing the quality of beauty!'

In a companion volume as dainty Mr. Gilder has also made a happy choice of the Odes, Sonnets, and Lyrics of Keats. A polished preface by the late E. C. Stedman enriches the collection. Along with the Severn portrait of Keats for frontispiece, appears together with a reproduction of the Haydon Life Mask, a note recounting Mr. Gilder's visit to Severn in 1879, and the enterprising interest this mask there first seen by him awakened. The fortunate result flowing out of his inquiries was that the two copies he after that succeeded in securing have thenceforth supplied this portrait to the lovers of Keats in the world. Among the precious pieces here collected we feel only like demurring gently as to the reading given of 'whence' instead of 'where' in the loveliest of all 'Sonnets on the Sea.' In these lines:

' Often 'tis in such gentle temper found  
That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
Be mov'd for days from where it sometimes fell  
When last the winds of heaven were unbound—'

the change of 'where' to 'whence' suggests the direction whence it fell instead of the place where it fell. The latter is obviously the poet's meaning.

Americans are fortunate indeed that in the blank verse of Emerson's 'Seashore' they have, in a divergent form, as beautiful an expression for an even<sup>er</sup> richer content.

C.P.

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